YUGAPURUSHA SHANKARA

Vidwan Shri N. Ranganatha Sharma

VEDANTA BHARATI

(Academy of Veda - Vedanta Studies and Research)
Chandramouli Road, K.R. Nagar
Pin-571602, Mysore District
Phone : 08223-662471

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SHRI H.N. NARASIMHIAH

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॥ श्री चतुर्भुजपट्टाभिरामो विजयते ॥

यडतोरे

श्री योगानन्देश्वर सरस्वती मठः

चन्द्रमौळि मार्गः, कृष्णराजनगरम्, मैसूरु मण्डलम्, कर्नाटक राज्यम्

श्रीमत्परमहंस–परिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य–पदवाक्यप्रमाणपारावारपारीण-यमनियमासन–प्राणायामप्रत्याहार–ध्यानधारणसमाध्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठान-निष्ठगरिष्ठतपश्चक्रवर्त्यनाद्यविच्छिन्न–गुरुपरम्पराप्राप्त–षड् दर्शनस्थापनाचार्य-व्याख्यान–सिंहासनाधीश्वर–सकलवेदार्थप्रकाश–साङ्ख्यत्रयीप्रतिपालक सकलनिगमागमसारहृदय वैदिकमार्गप्रवर्तक सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रादिराजधानी श्रीमद्विद्यानगरमहाराजधानी–कर्नाटकसिंहासन–प्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य–श्रीमद्राजाधिराज गुरुभूमण्डलाचार्य श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्य शिष्यपरम्पराप्राप्त कावेरी हेमावती तीरवास श्री नरसिंहपुरवराधीश्वर-

श्री श्री चतुर्भुजपट्टाभिरामस्वामि श्री श्री नीलकण्ठेश्वरस्वामि
यडतोरे (कृष्णराजनगर) श्री योगानन्देश्वरसरस्वतीमठपीठाधीश्वर
श्री श्री श्री रामब्रह्मानन्दसरस्वती स्वामिनां दिव्यपादपद्माराधक
श्री श्री श्री गणपति भारती स्वामिनां शिष्यैः

श्री श्री श्री शङ्करभारती स्वामिभिः

नारायणस्मरणपूर्वक–विरचिताशीः परम्परास्समुल्लसन्तुतराम् ।

"अज्ञानान्तर्गहनपतितानात्मविद्योपदेशैः" इत्युक्तदिशा संसार-समुद्राद् अज्ञान् लोकान् समुद्धर्तुमेव श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाः आविर्बभूवुरित्यत्र नास्ति सन्देहः । द्वात्रिंशति वर्षेष्वेव ते प्रसन्नगम्भीरं भाष्यं जग्रन्थुः, बहूनि स्तोत्राणि प्रणिन्युश्च । आसेतोः आतुहिनाचलं निरन्तरं परिव्रजद्भिः तैः कृतानि अनितरसाधारणकार्याणि सर्वान् विस्मापयन्ते । सर्वमेतत् आस्तिकाः सर्वे समवगच्छन्तु इति धिया भगवत्पादानां चरितं, तैः प्रतिपादितं सिद्धान्तञ्च कृत्स्नं सङ्ग्रहेण **"युगपुरुष शङ्कर"** इत्याख्ये लघुशरीरात्मके पुस्तकेऽस्मिन् कन्नडभाषायां न्यरूपयन् विद्वांसः श्री एन्. रङ्गनाथ शर्माणः । इमे च वैयाकरणा वेदान्तादिशास्त्रेषु कृतभूरिपरिश्रमाः, शास्त्राध्यापनरताः प्रणेतारश्च बहूनां ग्रन्थानाम् । बिभ्रति च अस्माकं मठविषये महतीं भक्तिं श्रद्धाञ्च एते । कन्नडभाषानभिज्ञैः अपि ग्रन्थोऽयमधीयतामिति श्री नरसिंहय्यमहोदयः आङ्ग्लभाषया अनूदितवान् । एष च श्री नरसिंहय्यमहोदयः गुरुमुखात् वेदान्तमधीतवान्, नितरां गुरुभक्तश्च । तेनानूदितं ग्रन्थमिममधीत्य सर्वे आस्तिकाः श्रेयोभाजो भवन्तु इत्याशास्महे ।

अस्मदाराध्यदेवः श्री चतुर्भुजपट्टाभिरामः श्री नीलकण्ठेश्वरस्वामी च ग्रन्थकर्तॄन् अनुवादकान्, ग्रन्थप्रकाशिकाया वेदान्त-भारत्याः कार्यकर्तॄन् च अनुगृण्हीतामिति वयं प्रार्थयामहे ॥

इति नारायणस्मरणम् ।

Preface

Of the various activities visualised by **Vedanta Bharati** for the propagation of *Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada's* divine message and philosophy for the benefit of common people, a significant one is the week-long programme in Bangalore *Shankara Sandesha Saptaha.*

In connection with this *Saptaha* programme from 18 December to 24 December 2000 at over 100 centres all over Bangalore city, we cherished a desire to bring out a short and succinct book on the Bhagavatpada's life, works and philosophy. Fortunately for us, the great and erudite scholar, Vidwan Shri N. Ranganatha Sharma happily agreed to our request to prepare such a book in Kannada. The time available for the task was very short; but Shri Ranganatha Sharma achieved it and helped us realise our dream. **Vedanta Bharati** is grateful to him indeed. **'Yugapurusha Shankara'** is the title of the book.

This is the English rendering of **'Yugapurusha Shankara'.** The translation has been ably handled by Shri H.N. Narasimhiah of Bangalore, a sincere devotee of **Sri Sri Shankara Bharati Swamiji.**

The publication of this English title has been made possible with the financial support extended by *Shri R. Shiva Rao* of Canada and *Shri A.P. Shanta Ram* of Bangalore and *Shri U. Prabhakar Rao* of Delhi. The printing of the book has been completed in record time. Thanks to Vagartha Printers for their elegant printing in time. May Acharya Shankara shower His blessings on all these devotees and protect them.

Vedanta Bharati enjoys the blessings of its Chief Patron Sri Jagadguru **Sri Sri Sri Bharati Teertha Mahaswamiji** of Dakshinamnaya Sharada Peetha of Sringeri. Our prostrations to Him in all humility.

The patron of *Vedanta Bharati* and its guiding spirit **Sri Sri Sri Shankara Bharati Swamiji** has been the life-giving force in all the activities of the organisation in the propagation of Vedantic Philosophy and Vedic research. Our prostrations to Him in full surrender.

Sunday, 16 January 2002
Vikrama Samvatsara Margasira
Bahula Chaturdasi

Anantasharma Bhuvanagiri
On behalf of
VEDANTA BHARATI

Second Edition

All the copies of **Yugapurusha Shankara** were sold out within a few months of its first edition. The affection and generosity shown towards this book by the pious people inspired **Vedantha Bharathi** to bringout this ***second*** edition, anticipating the same kind of response from the generous public. Our sincere gratitudes to all those who helped us in bringing out this book again for the second time.

Hari Om !

Krishnarajanagara
14-01-02

Director
Vedantha Bharathi

Dedication

This country was well protected when it was ruled by Kshatriya kings. Kshatriyas had respect for Dharma. They had the self-pride that they should follow the path shown by their elders and that their dynasty should not become infamous. They had self-respect. The period of Kshatriyas ended. Kings of various shades ascended the throne. The four-legged Dharmapurusha stood on one leg after lifting his three legs up one by one. When the foreigners invaded the country and became masters, the Dharmapurusha was relegated to a corner, and he stood leaning against a wall. Thereafter during the British regime, he is without the support of the wall, stood with the support of a staff. Afterwards leaders like Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi started talking of independence of the country, using words like Truth, Dharma, Non-violence etc. Hearing this, Dharmapurusha anxiously attemped to come forward like the bee that tried to come out of the lotus which had closed its petals:

रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातं
भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पङ्कजश्रीः ।
इत्थं विचिन्तयति कोशगते द्विरेफे
हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीं गज उज्जहार ॥

(The bee entered the lotus in full bloom; the sun set and the lotus closed its petals. The bee thought he would be free in the morning when, at the time of sun rise, the lotus would open its petals. Alas, that could not be as an elephant uprooted the lotus at night, and the bee had no escape.)

The country was at last liberated! But, things became worse. Dharmapurusha after discarding the staff, collapsed on the floor.

Perceiving this sad vision of future, the far-sighted Sri Shankaracharya established four mathas in the four directions of the country to protect Dharma. Following this example several mathas were set up by his disciples. The

Dharmapurusha is still alive sustained by the life-support provided by these mathas.

Sri Shankara Bharati Swamiji, the Head of Sri Yoganandeswara Matha at Yadatore (K.R. Nagara) who has taken a solemn resolve to organise a huge Jnana Yagna, ordained me to write a book on Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. He instructed that it should contain in brief Sri Shankara's life sketch, essentials of Advaita Siddhanta, elaboration of some of his well meaning utterances, and help rendered by him for promotion of Dharma. He also indicated that it should be a small introductory hand work, and should be of help to all interested people. To fulfil his orders to the best of my ability I have attempted this work.

Previously, as per the injunctions of Sri Sringeri Jagadguru Mahaswamiji, I had translated Sri Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya to Kannada. It is published in two volumes. Thereafter I composed verses in samskrita 'Sri Shankara Charitamrutam' and translated it into Kannda. this work has been published by the Advaitha Vidya Pratishtana, under the direction of Sri Narayanshrama Swamiji of Hebbur. In a similar direction is this third work 'Yugapurusha Shankara'. I offer with gratitude my salutations at the feet of Sri Sri Shankara Bharati Swamiji, for having given me a good opportunity to render my humble service to Sri Bhagavatpada.

I pray that the Acharya's benevolent grace be on Vidwan Shri G. Mahabaleswara Bhat who has rendered service by going through the Kannada manuscript and for getting it printed.

भगवद्विभूतिरेका शङ्करनाम्ना बभूव भुवि भूमा ।
यद्वचनं श्रुतिसीमा यद्रचना सरस्वतीधामा ॥
सद्गुरुसेवाभारो द्वेधा त्रेधा चतुर्धा वा
पततु मदीये शिरसि प्रत्नं मन्येऽथ बृंहितं भाग्यम् ॥

17 December 2000
Bangalore

Vidwan Sri N. Ranganatha Sharma

Yuga Purusha Shankara

The Vedic lore is the holy basic text for us, the people of Bharata. We believe that it tells only the truth and that it shows the way to the well being of humanity. Veda is not composed by any man. In the earlier days when the sages were in deep meditation and in the state of perfect equilibrium, the Veda mantras were revealed to them by the grace of Iswara. Such rishis got the revelations of Veda mantra and they are not the authors. This is our firm conviction. It is for this reason that our people have been preserving its prestine quality by teaching the Veda in the guru parampara system and by learning it only by hearing. All our religious scriptures and ancient tenets have Veda as their source. All practices, religious observations and cultures of people in Bharata are based on Veda and hence are known as Vedic culture. The expanse of this culture entends from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas, and modern people call this Vedic culture as Hindu culture and Hindutva. Effective observance of this is Sanatana Dharma. **Sanatana means eternal.**

On this Vedic culture, established since time immemorial, a catastrophy befell, Charvakas, the non-believers of God, cropped up and started destroying all that was sacred and ancient. Buddhist scholars who were engaged in spreading Buddhism started condemning our religious practices and thinking, secured royal patronage and became a force to reckon with. Jainas also joined hands with them. Likewise, Tantrikas, Shaktas, Pashupatas, Bhairavas, Sauras, Ganapatyas etc. started preaching religious practices opposed to Dharma. Even among the followers of Veda, some defied the tradition, and brought forth explanations opposed to Vedas. This created confusion among the followers of Veda. The Hindu society disintegrated, and a state of uncertainity prevailed.

The main cause for this calamity was the absence of a Kshatriya king, who could protect Dharma. There was no ruler who could rule over the entire Bharata Khanda. Kings beset with greed and hatred and without any understanding were fighting among themselves disregarding even the welfare of their subjects. In this manner, worldly and our other-worldly matters were devoid of peace and satisfaction. At such an hour of enveloping darkness was born Sri Shankaracharya the dispeller of darkness and ignorance. Since the life sketch of Sri Shakaracharya is not clearly known to us, we can only infer on the basis of writings of learned historians.

There is a village *Kaladi* on the banks of the river *Poorna* in Kerala. This village is now becoming a Town. In that village lived a devoted Brahmin couple *Shivaguru* and *Aryamba*. Shivaguru was renowned as an erudite scholar. He belonged to Atri gotram Taithiriya Shakha of Krishna Yajurveda. To this couple, devotedly engaged in the worship of Shiva, a bright son was born. The boy was named *Shankara*. Before Shankara was three years of age, unfortunately, Shivaguru passed away. Aryamba brought up her only son Shankara with love, and in his fifth year celebrated the Upanayana with the help of her relatives. Shankara's learning started in a famous Samskrita school. Shankara was extraordinarily brilliant. He soon mastered Samskrita, attained proficiency in logic and grammar and was able to recite vedas with ease.

The teacher, who was full of admiration of Shankara's learning and intellect, bade farewell to Shankara, stating that the schooling for him in that pathashala was complete.

Shankara returning home from the gurukula was engaged in the service of his aged mother Aryamba. The glory of dazzling intelligence, goodness and erudition of the Brahmachari Shankara spread far and wide like the soothing light of the full

moon. The King of Kerala who came to see this wonderful boy, who was learned, humble and eloquent, was struck with astonishment. Immensely pleased, he desired to offer sumptuous wealth to Shankara, but the Brahmachari did not even touch it. He had the entire amount distributed amongst the poor by the King himself.

Admiring Shankara's sense of detachment, he rendered pranams to him and Aryamba saying 'in my country a bright light was dawned and I am blessed' and returned to his capital.

Probably, Shankara was when twelve years old. He had plenty of paternal property. Yet a sense of detachment arose in his mind. The desire that he should become a sanyasi became strong. Aryamba did not like his becoming a sanyasi. Shankara was worried as it was not proper to take sanyasa without the consent of his mother. One day, when he was bathing in the river Poorna, a crocodile caught his legs and pulled him to the deep waters. Hearing his wailing, Aryamba wept in sorrow. Shankara called out to her 'mother a crocodile is pulling me, I think it is my end. At least now I must become a Sanyasi, please permit me'. Aryamba was perplexed. Thinking that it was the last wish of her son, she gave permission. Shankara resolved mentally 'I have now accepted Sanyasa, I am a Sanyasi' and took to instant Sanyasa. As luck would have it the crocodile released him. The boy came to the shore. Aryamba was filled simultaneously with joy and sorrow.

The mother and the son came home. Shankara by his deft words consoled his mother. He explained his situation to his relatives in the neighbourhood. He told them, 'I am leaving as a Sanyasi; my mother is alone'. He requested them to take care of her with compassion. They agreed. Sri Shankara consoled his mother, and promising that he would be by her side whenever she thought of him, left the house wearing the ochre robe and holding a staff. The village was wonder struck.

During this period, on the banks of the Narmada lived a great Sanyasi called *Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada,* a direct disciple of *Sri Gowdapadacharya,* who was renowned as a Brahmajnani. Shankara approached him, prostrated before him and told him his story. Seeing and wondering at the brilliance, humility and skill of speech of the young ascetic, Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada initiated him into Sanyasa and accepted him as his disciple. Thereafter Sri Shankara Yati learnt Vedanta from his master. Teaching the *Upanishads,* the *Bhagavadgeetha* and *Brahmasutras* - (the Prasthanatraya) Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada taught Sri Shankara that it is the non-dual Brahman that is the traditionally accepted purport of the Vedanta. Extremely brilliant Shankara grasped the essence of the shastras quickly. He became proficient in all shastras. As ordained by his guru, he wrote the commentary on the Prasthanatraya desiring to establish absolute monism as propounded in the Vedanta and bearing in mind the welfare of humanity. Shankara aimed at arresting the spread of non-vedic religions. He proceeded to Kashi after obtaining the blessings of his master. He saw Lord Viswanatha and lived under the trees on the banks of the Ganga by accepting alms only in his palm.

There might be delay in the sunrise after the night, but once the Sun rises, there would not be any delay in the spreading of the light right up to the horizon. Sri Shankara's fame spread very soon everywhere. On seeing the great scholarship, eloquence and well earned Brahmatejas gained through the strength of penance, the pundits of Kashi were astonished, and surrendered themselves to the Acharya. Sri Sanandana, a scholar from Chola, got initiated into Sanyasa by Sri Shankara and became famous as *Sri Padmapadacharya.* Likewise, virtuous and detached people, desirous of self realisation, came and set themselves in the service of the young Sri Shankara, who had

displayed his wonderful brilliance, and was widely known, just as honey bees seek and take refuge in the fragrant lotus.

Teaching the secrets of Vedanta to the disciples, holding discussions with Vidwans, and studying new texts, Sri Shankara was completely absorbed in Self-contemplation. One day, when Sri Shankara was on his way to the Ganga to take his noon bath Sri Parameswara disguised as an *antyaja* (untouchable) and accompanied by four dogs appeared before him to test him. Then the Acharya asked the antyaja to step aside and make way for him. The antyaja asked Sri Shankara, 'Sir who should step aside? Is it the actionless Brahman or the inert body'? Sri Shankara realised that the antyaja was a Brahmajnani and composed that very moment and sang the *Manisha Panchaka stotra.* The refrain of this poem reads, 'be he a chandala or a twice born, he is my guru, that is my firm conviction'. At once Lord Viswanatha who had appeared as an antyaja was pleased and revealed his divine form, blessed Sri Shankara with abhaya hasta and disappeared. The Acharya was mightily pleased on receiving such blessings as good forebodings for his future endeavours.

Soon after, Sri Shankara proceeded with his disciples to Badarikashrama and got engaged in penance. As inspired by his guru, Sri Shankara wrote exhaustive commentaries on Prasthanatraya. A few learned sages at Badari who read the commentaries, extolled the young saint with great pleasure. Sri Shankara was pleased that his commentaries had received the consent of Vidwans, and returned to Kashi. He taught his Bhashyas to his disciples.

While Sri Shankara was teaching the Bhashyas on the banks of the Ganga, *Sri Vedavyasa* appeared before him in the *guise of a brahmana* and sat observing the teaching method. Thereafter, discussions ensued between that brahmana and the

Acharya on a certain sutra. Sri Shankara was boldly answering the questions raised by the Brahmana. Pleased with the replies, Sri Vedavyasa revealed himself and said 'Oh! Shankara Yati, you have realised the true import of the Shaareeraka Sutras compiled by me and you have fully understood me. Make the Bhashyas well known all over Bharata Khanda and protect the vedic tenets. May you be blessed. So saying he vanished. The Acharya was astonished and at the same time delighted. He remembered his guru Sri Govindabhagavatpada's instructions.

Sri Shankara heard about one great vidwan *Sri Kumarila Bhatta in Prayaga,* who was renowned for his erudition in *Meemamsa.* With the intention of making such a vidwan write Vartika on the Sutra Bhashyas, Sri Shankara proceeded to Prayaga. Sri Kumarila Bhatta had become a sishya of Bouddha guru in order to understand the tenets of that religion. Having learnt all about that religion he refuted the same. By this he thought that a disservice had been done to his Bouddha guru and by way of atonement for the sin, he sat on fire of husk to destroy himself by burning. The Acharya approached him and told him of his intension. Feeling sorry that it was then too late, Sri Kumarila Bhatta said, 'Acharya, it is unfortunate that I do not have the good fortune of writing Vartika on your Bhashyas. There is my disciple *Viswarupa* (Also known as Mandana Mishra.) at *Mahishmati.* He is a great scholar capable of writing the Vartika but he is hidebound in rituals. You have to win him in discussions and establish the supremacy of Jnanakanda and thus have your job done.' Then the Acharya proceeded to Mahishmati along with his disciples. He approached Vishwarupa and informed him of his desire. Arguments ensured between the Acharya and Vishwarupa.

This continued for a few days. Extremely profound arguments followed on the supremacy of karma and jnana,

Vishwarupa maintaining that karma alone can lead to liberation and the Acharya holding that it is by jnana alone that one can attain Moksha or liberation.

Vishwarupa's wife, *Ubhaya Bharati,* learned in all the shastras was the judge. Finally Vishwarupa accepted defeat in the discussions. Ubhaya Bharati who started arguments with the Acharya also lost in the debate. Seeing the matchless scholarship and the extraordinary brilliant eloquence of the Acharya, Vishwarupa surrendered to him, became his disciple and got initiated into sanyasa. He became famous as *Sri Sureshwaracharya.*

Subsequently, Sri Shankaracharya proceeded southward with his disciples, visited Srishaila, Gokarna, Kollur and Sribali (Shivalli), and arrived at Sringeri. Sri Totakacharya became a disciple. *Padmapada, Sureshwara, Hastamalaka* and *Totaka were the primary shisyas,* as though they were the four vedas. Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada consecrated at Sringeri, Goddess of learning Sri Sharada, with a view to protecting the vaidika dharma. Later it was this place that became famous as Dhakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetha.

Sri Shankaracharya stayed at Sringeri for some time on the banks of the *river Tunga,* teaching Prasthanatraya Bhashyas to the shishyas. It was during this period that he wrote several prakarana granthas such as Upadesha Sahasri, Vivekachudamani as also the highly devotional stotras like Shivanandalahari. At that time Aryamba who was on the death bed at Kaladi, remembered her son Shankara. As soon as Sri Shankara became aware of this through his divya drushti, he proceeded alone to Kaladi and entered his old home. He saw his bed-ridden mother. The aged mother was immensely happy on seeing her son. Even as the Acharya was saying a few words to her, Aryamba left her mortal coil.

Even at that hour of sorrow, no relative came near them. The Acharya informed them of his mother's demise and asked for help in performing the last rites to his mother. None agreed to come forward. Surprised at their hard-heartedness, Acharya decided to perform the last rites himself and requested them for fire. Those stupid people refused. Feeling sorrow for their foolishness, Sri Shankara himself produced fire, took the mother's body to the backyard and performed the cremation according to shastras. Sri Shankara thought - 'These people might not have extended any help to my mother in her old age. She must have suffered very much. These relations did not hesitate to refuse help even in performing the last rites.' So anguished he was, he cursed them- 'You have failed in your duties. Hereafter you will be unvedic'. Soon after he left Kaladi.

While he was touring in Kerala, Sureshwaracharya and other shishyas joined him. In consultation with them, he conveyed his decisions to them thus- 'Our preparations are over, henceforth we must condemn non-vedic religions and establish the eternal Vedanta Siddhanta in Bharatakhanda. This is the appropriate time to launch such a victory march.'

Having first won over the pundits of Kerala, he toured over Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andhra and entering Maharashtra, defeated all pundits opposed to non-dual Brahman philosophy. He later proceeded towards Gujarat. Thus, Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada toured all states in Bharatakhanda and by his unusual convincing eloquence, defeated Charvakas, Bouddhas, Jainas, Sankhyas and all such opponents. He held high the victory banner of Advaita. Wherever he went, he was attracting huge crowds. With their well being in mind, he gave discourses in simple language, and established the supremacy of Vaidikadharma. Cults such as Shakta, Pashupata and Bhairava were defeated, and they receded to the background.

Thus, after defeating opponents all over the country, he entered *Kashmira.* Here there was a current of bad reputation that none from the South had been able to *ascend the Sarvajna Peetha.* In order to remove such a stigma, Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada defeated all opposing pundits in the arguments and ascended the Sarvajna Peetha. He was revered by all.

Then, Sarvajna Sri Shankaracharya called all his disciples together, and said to them, 'Dear yatis of high order, in accordance with my guru's commands, we have endeavoured to the best of our ability to protect Vedic dharma. Henceforth all this should be permanently established in our Bharata Khanda. For this, I wish to say a word to you who are pure and austere, Let *Sri Sureshwara* preside over the Sharada Peetha already established by me at *Sringeri,* the *Dakshinamnaya Peetha.* Likewise, Mathas must be established in the remaining directions of our country. *Padmapada* should head Dwaraka Peetha, *Totaka* and *Hastamalaka* be heads of Badri and *Jagannathapuri Mathas* respectively, and conduct duties relating to Dharma. In the same way other astikas too must strive for firmly establishing Vaidikadharma at appropriate places. Let the yatiparampara unceasingly continue for protecting the Advaitha Darshana, handed down by tradition. You have all rendered devoted service to me in many ways. Now you can proceed to any place you desire. May God shower His blessings on you.' Thus saying he bade farewell to all. With tears in their eyes and unable to transgress guru's orders, the shishyas left.

Subsequently, Sri Bhagavatpada went alone to *Badarikashrama,* spent a few days in deep contemplation of the Supreme Narayana, went to Kedara and spent a few more days in contemplation of *Sri Kedareshwara.* At the complietion of *thirtytwo years* of age, he went into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* discarded his mortal coil and became one with Parabrahman.

So much for the brief life sketch of Sri Shankaracharya. Topics such as Parakaya pravesha described in texts like Sri Shankaravijaya are not referred to here. It is the universal opinion that the life span of Sri Shankara was thirty-two years, Difference of opinion exist regarding his life time. Some historical researchers opine that he lived between 788 A.D. and 820 A.D. Based on recent special researches, it is determined that he lived between 688 A.D. and 720 A.D. It can be summed up that he lived about 1300 years ago.

A Review of Sri Shankara's Life History

Each and every incident and every action related to Sri Shankara astonishes us. He had large paternal property. His mother was bringing him up with affection. Even then, is it not surprising that he wanted to renounce everything and go away at that tender age! Accepting Bhiksha and crossing forests, mountains and rivers only on foot, he went alone in search of his guru, Sri Govinda bhagavatpada, and reached him on the banks of the Narmada. This is no small wonder. That he attended perfect proficiency in all the Vedas and Shastras at that very young age is also astonishing. That the elderly shishyas like Sri Sureshwara and Padmapada sat at the feet of this young ascetic and studied is another such wonder. This brings to mind a stanza in Sri Dakshinamurthy Stotra-

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

(Young guru sitting under the banyan tree imparting spiritual wisdom in silent eloquence to aged disciples and dispelling all their doubts is really a wonder.)

When Sri Shankara wrote Brahmasutra Bhashya he was sixteen. Sri Shankara Digvijaya has described this work as an outcome of glorious penance and a compendium of eternal

revelling of Vagdevi- the Goddess of learning. The erudite scholar *Sri Vachaspati Misra* of unparalleled greatness, in the beginning of his *Bhamativyakhya* on *Sutra Bhashya* has said, 'Acharya's words flow like Ganga while our vakyas are like a flow in a drain.' That, within his life span of 32 years, he toured several times all over this country on foot, defeated the pundits in discussions and ascended the Sarvajna Peetha in Kashmir is an uncommon and unparalleled feat. It is beyond our imagination as to how he found time amidst his very busy schedule to write the Bhashyas on the Prasthanatraya and composed so many prakarana granthas and hymns. One ancient verse says

अष्टवर्षे चतुर्वेदी द्वादशे सर्वशास्त्रवित् ।
षोडशे कृतवान् भाष्यं द्वात्रिंशे मुनिरभ्यगात् ॥

(Sri Shankara mastered the four vedas at eight, at twelve he was learned in all the shastras, at sixteen he wrote Bhashyas and disappeared at thirty-two.)

Seeing these uncommon and wonderful achievements, I have attempted the following shloka in my work 'Sri Shankara charitam,'

द्वात्रिंशवत्सरादर्वाग् ईदृक् ते कृतिवैभवम् ।
सर्वज्ञः शङ्करोऽसि त्वां नमस्कुर्मो यथाबलम् ॥

(Before you were thirty-two, you achieved such great things; therefore you are verily that all-knowing Shankara Bhagavan. We salute you with all our might.)

Vedanta Philosophy and Advaita Doctrine

It became necessary that Sri Shankaracharya, who was endeavouring to protect Vaidika Dharma should show the path of the well-being of humanity as taught in the Vedas. Though it

was the off-beaten path by ancient sages, yet, due to various reasons, it was cluttered with stones and dust and was impure. The glory of clearing such impurities in this royal path goes to Sri Shankara. That is the doctrine of Vedanta Philosophy-*monism.* The final purport of the vedas is vedanta. Upanishads which explain the same are also termed vedanta. Those who follow this path are *vedantins.* Vedantins are the followers of the upanishads.

दृश्यते परमार्थः अनेनेति दर्शनम् । - Etymology of the word Darshana is ultimate truth. Freedom of inquiry has always been there in our country. No royal system came in its way. Hence the systems like Sankhya, Vaisesika, religious sects such as Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakta flourished. Systems such as Bouddha, Jaina and Charvaka, which do not accept the vedas as pramana also sprang up. In advaita philosophy, veda is the ultimate testimony. Logic, not opposed to veda and which is in conformity to experience, can also be accepted as proof. Whereas in systems such as Sankhya, logic is primary and veda's position is secondary. For Shaiva and Shakta etc., sects, words of one guru and earnestness and devotion are pramanas.

Purpose of Philosophies

To an inquiring person, a desire to know arises. 'When I say 'I' who is this 'I' ? Is it the body, the life principle, senses or mind? What is the reality behind the cognised world? To this 'I' and to this 'world', is there a creator god? If he exists, what is his reality? What is the purpose behind birth and death? Is it possible to completely eliminate sorrow and be absolutely peaceful?' It is the purpose of philosophy to furnish answers to these questions and to show the proper path for its achievement. Because Vedanta shows such ways of achieving this more specifically than other darshanas, it became famous

and popular. Sankhya and other systems remained confined to discussions by pundits.

Tenets of Advaita doctrine

What is meant by advaita? Advaita is that which is without a second. Dwaita means twoness. Eternal truth is one and one only, and there is no second substance. These are propounded in advaita. Sri Shankara has shown that this is Vedanta Darshana. The Acharya has not mentioned different Vedanta doctrines like Dwaita or Vishistadwaita anywhere. We can say that this is probably because such distinctions did not then exist in Vedanta. According to the Acharya. Advaita doctrine is the only vedanta siddhanta. All others are dwaitha darshanas. Sankhya, Bouddha, Jaina etc., have alluded to advaitins as Vedantins. This is noteworthy.

The sharp intellect of man is bound by the testimony of perception and inference. The astonishingly developed modern science is also based on these two testimonies which depend on experiments. Aptawakya- words of a trustworthy person i.e., verbal testimony, is also based on the knowledge gained through these two pramanas. Inference also is based on perception. As ultimate Brahman is beyond the pale of Pratyaksha, it is also beyond the scope of anumana-inference. Vedantins therefore took refuge in the Vedavak and developed Adhyatma Shastra. The famous saying goes as under :

प्रत्यक्षेणानुमित्या वा यस्तूपायो न बुध्यते
एनं विदन्ति वेदेन तस्माद्वेदस्य वेदता ॥

(The Adhyatma way which cannot be comprehended by pratyaksha or anumana is learnt through Veda by those who accept Veda as the proof. Hence the significance of the word Veda.)

It means - it makes known (instructs) that which is not cognizable to man. Therefore, *Shruti is called Veda.* For this reason Sri Shankaracharya primarily depends on the Upanishads. The Bhagavadgita, which is the essence of all Upanishads, the Badarayana Sutra which is to establish the authentic meaning of the above two-to these three he wrote commentaries and established firmly the Advaita Siddhanta.

Brahman is truth and the world is unreal is the core mantra of Advaita Siddhanta.

1. That which truly exists is verily Brahman.
2. This objective world is unreal.
3. Jeeva is Brahman itself and not distinct from Brahman.

Brahma

The word Brahma is derived from the root- "and to grow." The word meaning of Brahma is big. That which is all pervasive, endless, permanent and beyond words and mind - cannot be comprehended by other words. The Upanishads generally use the word Brahman. Word Atma is also used. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म । This Atman is Brahman. In this Sruti, Atma means Jiva. The Supreme when in a different state is denoted as Jiva. Hence the common usage - the Supreme being and Jivatma.

That one only without a second is Brahman. Existence, knowledge and infinity is Brahman. That without quality, immutable, peace and bliss is said to be brahman. All these are Vedavakyas which make known the existence and nature of Brahman. Srutivakyas such as all this is Brahman, Atma is all, this Purusha is all this and there is no multiplicity - all these tell us that the entire gammot of visible universe is Brahman and there is no second object other than this. It is this that has been explained as Supreme Brahman, unqualified, without distinct existence, knowledge and bliss.

Saguna Brahman (Qualified Brahman)

The Supreme Brahman Itself by the play of the inexplicable power of Maya is called qualified Brahman. This is the cause for creation, sustenance and destruction. In the world, people prefer to refer to this Saguna Brahman as god and Iswara. Puranas describe this Iswara engaged in creation, sustenance and destruction as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra (Siva) respectively. Therefore Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are not different. The casual energy of these three forms of creation, sustenance and destruction - are to be known as Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati respectively. Saguna Brahman assuming forms of different gods for the sake of meditation by the devotees, blesses them. All gods are glorious manifestations of Saguna Brahman. The three special powers of these gods are described as goddesses and consorts of the respective gods. All these are aids in the path of devotion.

The world

A question arises. If there is nothing other than Brahman, how did the world come into existence? Infinite are the varieties of men, animals, birds and insects. Earth, fire, water, air, and the Sun planets and stars are innumerable, and hence it is clear that the world is essentially dual. Is it not inconsistent to say that the entire world is Brahman? All things originate and perish. They have manifold forms and activity. There is no semblance of Brahman in these. Such objections do crop up. Reply to such objections by Vedanta is as under .

Just as a magician creates manifold objects by his magical powers, Iswara, by his wonderful power of Maya has created this universe. Objects created by the magician appear real to the onlookers. Likewise, this unverse appears as real to us. This is the result of our ignorance. So long as ignorance persists, the universe also appears real. This, the advaitins call

Avidya (nescience). Until the dawn of Brahmajnana, this ignorance persists. To substantiate this, the example of 'rope serpent' is given.

In dim light, a piece of rope lying at a distance appears like a snake. People fear and shiver as though they are seeing a real snake. Therefore, this has to be realised as the play by Mayashakti.

Followers of Advaita doctrine do not accept the theory that the universe is made up of indestructible atoms. The reason is, Parabrahma is formless, unchangeable and eternal as made known by the vedas. न तु तद् द्वितीयमस्ति I No such second thing other than this exists. Similar substances emphasise that there is no second object. स ऐक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति I (He thought- I may create the universe) बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति I I will become manifold- I will be born this way). Many similar sentences occur in various Upanishads. Iswara's Maya has uncontemplatable power of creation, so proclaims the Veda Shastras. मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् I (Understand *Maya as Prakriti* (Nature) and *Iswara as Mayavi* - wielder of Maya. Many are such sentences. Therefore, according to Vedanta, Prakriti is Iswara's Maya Shakti.

To make a pot, clay and potter are very essential. These two are causes for the creation of a pot. Here, clay is the material cause and potter, the efficient cause. These two causes must exist for all creations. Thread is the material cause for cloth, weaver, the efficient cause. Such assumptions can be made. For this diverse universe, however, Brahman is the material and the efficient cause. Brahman is perceived in the form of the universe. Hence is the material like clay for pot. Brahman being the sentient principle is also the efficient cause like the potter.

Lump of clay to become a pot gives up its original form and assumes another. Likewise is the transformation of thread to cloth, milk to curds, butter to ghee etc. This transformation in

form is called Parinama. The peculiarity here is that Brahman does not transform Himself into the universe. This must be clearly understood. Vedantins call this as vivartha of Brahman. Vivarta-transfiguration means appearing to be different while not giving up its original form. Rope appearing as snake is vivartha. A tree stump at a distance appearing as man is also vivartha. Likewise wherever one appears as another the vivartha vada must be accepted. It is an account of vivartha that Brahman appears as universe. Hence there is no harm if the non-dual Brahman appears as dual world, inert and multi-formed. There is no difficulty, if we say that Brahman appears as universe on account of Avidya (nescience). When the knowledge of serpant in the rope is removed, that which remains is only the rope. Mutatis mutandis in universe and Brahman. To the mistaken serpent, rope is the substratum and to the universe, the Brahman.

Idea behind unreality of the Universe

The abodes we dwell in are all unreal. So are the machines, the factories etc. If we say that the universe does not exist, it is astonishing. Can this be believed? But in this, there is no such astonishment. We must understand the reality here. Can not we say that what is not real is unreal? We must first understand what is meant by reality. Sri Shankaracharya says, यद्रूपेण यन्निश्चित तद्रूप न व्यभिचरति तत् सत्यम्। (That when once determined as of one form, does not ever change that form, is reality). This is the definition of reality as per Sri Shankara charya. This means that which is determined as of a form and exists uniformly as such and never changes is reality. by this definition the universe can never be real. Everything in the universe is ever changing-grows, decays and dies. In the final dissolution, the entire universe is annihilated. Brahman is the only reality that does not change in all the three times. The

upanishad says सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । (existence, consciousness, infinite is Brahman) that only Brahman is real.

When a rope is mistaken for a serpent, the rope is real and serpent is unreal. This is irrefutable. Until the mistaken identity prevails, one feels that serpent is real. Likewise, until Avidya presists universe is real. All wordly activities are only in avidya state. So then our activities must be in proper order.

The world, merit, demerit, injunction, prohibition etc.are all in parlance and considered real. For a Brahmajnani whose nescience is annihilated, world and wordly experience become unreal. That the world is unreal is from the stand point of Brahmajnani. It can be easily accepted that until Brahmajnana dawns, world is real to us.

Process of Creation

Saguna Brahma is Iswara in association with Maya. आत्मन आकाशः संभूतः । (from Atman ether was born) In this Srutivakya describing order of creation, Atma means Iswara. Ether, air, fire, water and earth were created in this order and by panchikarana (quintuplication) are inter-mixed. Thereafter, were born the vegetation, food, man and other animals says the Sruti. Body sense organs etc. of beings are by transformation of the five elements ether etc. All these belong to the inert world. The indescribable Maya Shakti of Iswara is the primal cause of the insentient universe because this universe is transfiguration of Paramatma and concocted by Maya. It is evident that there is no eternal fixity for it.

The next question is- What is that sentient Jiva that subsists in the unsentient mind, body etc? Paramatma is the only sentient and there is no other. By Vedic testimonies such

as the anupravesha sruti- तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् (तै. आ-६) that Paramatma which entered mind, body etc. is Jivatma. This is established in Advaita Siddhantha.

Jiva

From the root जीव–प्राणधारणे, the word Jiva is derived. That which holds the vital air means, it is Jiva that holds the vital air in the body. In the above anupravesha Sruti, it is said that Paramatma is Jivatma. This is clearer in Chandogya- अनेन जीवेन आत्मना अनुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणि । (छा.६.३.२). On this Sri Shankaracharya writes in his Bhashya- "Jiva is the holder of Prana." So the Sruti says: "from himself who is that agent, the Jiva". As non-difference is stated, the Sruti says that Jiva is non-different from Paramatma and Jiva being sentient there is nothing extraordinary in Jiva.

Entering here means not as entering a house from without. Atman being infinite, embodies and all-pervading, is already pervading the body. Hence, Atman is to be realised in the intellect in the cave of the heart and one need not go out in search . This is the purport, rhetorically stated in the anupravesha sruti- यो वेद निहित गुहायाम् is the Sruti. गुहा means intellect- inner sense organ. Atma, in association with inner sense organ- the mind, is Jiva. In the Ultimate, there is no such speciality. In the terminology of scriptures, Jiva is referred to as delimited by the inner organ. Innumerable are the delimiting inner sense organs; so are the Jivas innumerable. It is just as there will be as many pot ethers as there are pots, while ether is one only.

Merit and demerit leave impressions upon the mind only. One's merit and demerit does not relate to another. As the samsara is beginningless Jivas take up births according to their

actions. Jiva is subservient to Maya. On account of avidya, he will be of limited knowledge and of limited power whereas, Iswara has Maya under his control. Therefore, Iswara is omniscient and omnipotent.

Oneness of Brahman and Jiva

From Srutis like सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म, आत्मैवेदं सर्वं, पुरुष एवेदं सर्वम् । (All this is Brahman, All this is Atman, All this is Purusha) it is clear that the entire universe is Brahman. Jivatma is also Brahman. For people entire universe is Brahman. Jivatma is also Brahman. For people immersed in worldly activity, it is difficult to develop faith in these. Therefore, out of sheer compassion towards the people suffering from worldly sorrow, the divine words- the Upanishads-repeatedly teach Advaita as the essence of Vedanta. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad loudly proclaims fourteen times इय पृथिवी......योऽयमात्मा इदममृतमिदं ब्रह्म इदं सर्वम् । (This world.... That is Atman.... All this is the immortal- all this is Brahman.) In Chandogya, sage Uddalaka teaches his son swetaketu, nine times saying- ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं । तत् सत्य । स आत्मा । तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो । It was said previously that the extremely subtle Sat is the origin of the universe. This is the very essence of the universe. This Sat is the only reality. That is the pratyagatma – Jivatma. Oh Swetaketu, you are that Sat. This is the underlying idea behind the above teaching. When this was brought home to Swetaketu, he too must have been perplexed like all others. To eradicate such feeling and to establish the truth, sage Uddalaka repeated this nine times to instruct Sadvidya by dispelling all doubts. If the Mahavakya तत्त्वमसि (That thou art) is twisted as the dualists do, there was no need to repeat it nine times. Likewise it should be understood that the other Mahavakyas like अहं ब्रह्मास्मि (I am Brahman) establish clearly the Advaita doctrine.

Moksha (Liberation)

Moksha means liberation. Liberation from what ? Liberation from the transmigratory existence filled with threefold sorrow. Not realizing his true Self due to Avidya, man has appropriated to himself such qualities as – I am man, male, female, fat, sick, doer, enjoyer, which are not really his. Self knowledge is the realization in the manner "Truly in me the Pratyagatma (inner self), no such quality exists. I am distinct from body, the senses etc. I am eternal pure Consciousness". This indeed is Brahmajnana. It is to be known that liberation is when such enlightenment dawns by the grace of Guru and Shastra. To firmly abide in one's true Self is liberation. ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति (Knower of Brahman is Brahman Itself). Liberation is not going to another world. Where can the Self, which is all pervading and of all forms go ! Liberation is like water in the pot becoming one with the water in the ocean when the pot is broken in the ocean. The individual soul जीवात्मा gets merged in the universal soul परमात्मा । Even this example is not comprehensive. It is because of avidya, man is said to be samsari (one subject to transmigration). Even in that state as he is Paramatma (The universe soul) Himself, there is nothing for himself to become afresh. ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति । ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति । (Being Brahman Itself attains Brahman. Knowledge of Brahman is Brahman Itself) To abide firmly in the Self is liberation.

Advaita doctrine admits जीवन्मुक्ति (liberation when alive). When true knowledge arises and the knowledge "I am Brahman" is well established, that man is liberated indeed अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते (even while in this body, he attains Brahman) proclaims the Sruti. Authoritative sentences such as तमेव विद्वानमृत इह भवति । (One who realizes Brahman in this manner becomes immortal here itself) are to be noted. Even for liberated when alive, and a Jnani, the

body persists until the karma that has begun to yield fruits gets exhausted. Differences of opinion exist as to whether remnants of avidya remain or not for such a person. For the upliftment of the world a Jivanmukta might engage himself in activity. Fall of the body is termed as Videhamukti. For a liberated (mukta), there is no rebirth.

Aids for liberation

Sentences such as यो वेद निहितं गुहायां । विदित्वा अमृतत्वमेति । (He who knows It even if hidden in the cave. Having known, he attains immortality) determine that knowledge is the means for liberation. How is this Self knowledge obtained ? Such a question confronts the person desirous of liberation. The specialty of Vedanta lies in answering this question essential for Jnana and specifying the wealth of such aids for liberation साधनसम्पत् । Sankhyas etc. have not properly elaborated such wealth of aids.

There is clear enunciation of such aids for liberation in the Upanishads. The Bhagavadgita describes these in an orderly way. They are what are found in Dharma sastras. Intention and purpose may be different. If drinking water is contaminated, health deteriorates and illness occurs. To regain health, this drinking water must become pure. Likewise, impurity, that is the impressions of several births, has accumulated in our minds causing enhancements of desire and anger, becomes the cause for the illness ajnana and consequent misery in life. The primary cause of such impurity must be eradicated and the mind should become pure. On mind becoming pure does Jnana arise. Self is realized.

Karma (action) and Bhakti (devotion) are essential for purity of mind. Our actions, be they ordained by scriptures

or mundane should not be motivated by selfishness. When action is performed, thinking it as God's command and propitiate Him, it becomes action devoid of desire – nishkama karma. Such a performer is Karmayogi. As there is not even a trace of selfishness, there cannot be foul action in Nishkama Karma yoga. This Karmayoga is very essential for purification of the mind.

Devotion must have arisen naturally in a person, who does action to please Iswara. Meditation is a form of contemplation. Contemplation with concentration of mind is meditation. For one consistently engaged in Karmayoga, wealth of spiritual aids such as shama- tranquility, dama-self restraint, Uparati-indifference, etc. accrue by Iswaranugraha – Iswara's grace. Action and devotion are twin means for purity of mind. चित्तस्य शुद्धये कर्म न तु वस्तूपलब्धये । (action is for purification of mind and not for Self realisation). भक्त्या मामभिजानाति (by devotion he knows Me in essence) as per this Gitavakya, devotion is the cause for Self realisation and thereafter liberation is certain.

Superiority of Advita (monism)

Special fitness is required to properly understand Advaita doctrines and to have complete faith therein. This is not easily understood by all. The Avadhuta Gita, therefore, says ईश्वरानुग्रहादेव पुंसामद्वैतवासना । (only by the grace of Iswara the intution of monism arises in men).

This monism is a very ancient vedic doctrine. This is an unbroken contribution by the vedic sages to spirituals seekers. This flow of praise of Advaita can also be seen in samhitas which form the main part of Karmakanda. Sri Shankaracharya did not establish afresh this Advaita doctrine. The Acharya, by cleansing all impurities accumulated due to several causes,

made this doctrine a jewel shining in all its splendour. This siddhanta is handed down from eternity. He established well that there is one single principle underlying this mainfold world. The Acharya not only denounced systems such as Sankhya, but also refuted the old theory of knowledge and action as complimentary means as in dwaita vada. He has unfolded clearly this pure Advaita doctrine, which is handed down traditionally from master to pupil. The Acharya Guru lineage is as under :

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठम्
शक्तिश्च तत्पुत्रपराशरश्च ।
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तम्
गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ।

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्म-
पादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम्
तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यान्
अस्मद्गुरून् सन्ततमानतोस्मि ॥

(Here vartikakara means Sri Sureswaracharya)

SOME WISE STATEMENTS OF BHAGAVATPADA

A few statements culled out from several works of Sri Shankaracharya are given below along with their explanations. By perusal of these, not only do we recollect what has been already said regarding Advaita doctrine, but can also comprehend new subjects. One can appreciate the beauty of Sri Shankara's literary style. These wise statements are worth memorising.

१. अध्यासो नाम अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः –अध्यास भाष्य

Superimposition is to be understood as knowledge of something as some other thing. It is commonly said that superimposition is only an illusion. Mistaking a rope for a snake is called illusion in parlance. Primarily vedantins, while talking of non-self, use the word superimposition. To know that in the eternal, pure and conscious principle, Brahman, the impure, inert universe exists is superimposition – adhyasa. Understanding the inner Self as the body that I am dark, I am fair etc. is also adhyasa. Even mistaken notions like " I take birth, I die" are also adhyasa.

२. तमेतमेवं लक्षणमध्यासं पण्डिता अविद्येति मन्यन्ते । –अध्यास भाष्य

Learned men consider such adhyasa as Avidya. Though adhyasa is Avidya, the latter is used in a wider sense. Ignorance, doubt, misunderstanding, arising from tamoguna (inertia) etc. are all Avidya. Though everything is Atman the dwaitha Jnana that non Self like pot etc. as existing is Avidya. Desire, anger etc. arise from Avidya. The Acharya has also said that Avidya is incorrect understanding.

३. तामसो हि प्रत्ययः आवरणात्मकत्वात् अविद्या,
विपरीतग्राहकः संशयोपस्थापको वा अग्रहणात्मको वा । –गीताभाष्य

Wrong knowledge arising from tamoguna is Avidya. This shows one thing as the other, gives room for doubt or conceals the truth.

४. सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य आत्मभूते इव अविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य माया शक्तिः प्रकृतिरिति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलप्येते ॥ -सू.भा. २.१.१४

It is mentioned in Srutis and Smritis that names and forms, appearing as though merged in Iswara's form, are but Iswara's Maya power and primordial nature. These names and forms cannot be included in Iswara's form. These are neither seen nor do they exist separate from Iswara and as such, these cannot be said to be distinct either from Iswara. Hence, they are inexplicable. These unmanifest names and forms are the primary cause for the manifest universe.

This is the purport of the above sukti. Here the unmanifest name and form are termed as Maya, Shakti and Prakriti. The universe is the gross form of name and form. Maya of Iswara has three qualities. As this Maya has the capacity to create gross name and form, the subtle name and form are described here as Maya. This power of Maya is subservient to Iswara. In the beginning of the Gita Bhashya, the Acharya has written.

स च भगवान्.....त्रिगुणात्मिकां वैष्णवीं स्वां मायां
मूलप्रकृतिं वशीकृत्य.....स्वमायया देहवानिव
जात इव च लोकानुग्रहं कुर्वन् लक्ष्यते ।

This Iswara having control over his own Vaishnavi maya possessing three qualities, the primordial nature appearing by His own Maya, as though embodied and born, is seen to uplift mankind. Also, Avidya is the essence of the seed force

denoted by the word Avyakta-unmanifest. Also, in Sutra Bhashya(1-43) he says - अविद्यात्मिका हि बीजशक्तिः अव्यक्तशब्दनिर्देश्या परमेश्वराश्रया मायामयी महासुप्तिः । सू.भा. १-४-३

The seed force having Avidya as its essence, denoted by the word avyakta with Parameswara as its support is of the nature of Maya, and is the great slumber (Mahasupti). Here primordial nature does not mean the independent 'Prakriti' of the Sankhyas. In Vedanta, 'Prakriti' is used to mean Maya, controlled by Iswara.

मायान्तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् । (श्वे.४.१०)

Thus, though there are sharp differences in the shades of meaning in the words Adhyasa, Avidya, Maya .... all are encompassed in erroneous knowledge, superficial knowledge and Bhrama the mistaken identity. Therefore, In Vedanta these are used without distinction. It is well known that ordinarily it is termed as Maya when in association with Iswara, and Avidya when in association with Jiva. Ocean, cloud, river, tank, and well all contain only water. Thus in one sense they are non-different. But in another sense they are different. There is also the cause – effect relationship among them, like the cloud from the ocean, the river from the cloud etc. For the misunderstanding of these varied types, it is to be known, that the basis is Iswara's power of Maya. This is the fundamental tenet of Advaita doctrine.

५. दर्शयति च श्रुतिः पररूपप्रतिषेधेनैव ब्रह्म निर्विशेषत्वात् ।

(सू.भा. ३.२.१७)

In Vedanta, Brahman has been described as attributeless unqualified, formless and undifferentiated. Therefore, Brahman is made known in Sruti only through negation. As the universe is

of three qualities, all things perceived by us are qualified. Some attribute is always found in a thing or object that can be differentiated as jati (genus), guna (quality) and kriya (action) eg. Man, animal, tree, etc. In these, man-hood, animal-hood and treeness are the genus respectively. In 'the white', 'the black', etc. qualities like whiteness and blackness etc. are found. In 'cook,' 'writer' etc. actions like cooking and writing are seen. Therefore things can be recognized by their attributes. As no such attributes exists in Brahman, no word can indicate It. Every word tells us about one of the three attributes-viz. genus, quality and action. This attribute is said to be the cause for the prediliction – Pravritti. Further, words denoting names like Chaitra and Maithra are not specifically limited to any person. Sruti adopts the following method in describing Brahman :

अ) अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि (के. १.४)

Brahman is other than what is known and what is not known.

आ) यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह (तै. २.९)

That from which words retreat along with the mind being unable to reach.

इ) अथात आदेशो नेति नेतीति (बृह. २.३.६)

So then the Truth of truth- the absolute truth is indicated as, "not this, not this".

Attributeless Brahman is beyond the pale of words. How can It be made known? Even when indicated by any word, to stay quite after employing the above method of negation is the only way out.

'विज्ञानमानन्द ब्रह्म' । 'विज्ञानघन एव' । 'ब्रह्म' 'आत्मा' (Consciousness and Bliss is Brahman. Verily a lump of Consciosness. Brahma,

Atma) To denote Brahman by such words is also by the Superimposition of name, form, quality and action on It. This is termed as 'Super-Imposition' -adhyaropa. This is introducing Brahman in a general manner. Thereafter Sruti negates name and form as 'not this', 'not this',. This is called 'negation'-apavada. The purport is Brahman is realized only by Self realisation. It is to be noted that, the Upanishads adopt consistently this method of superimposition and negation.

६. तार्किको हि अनागमज्ञः स्वबुद्धिपरिकल्पितं यत्किञ्चिदेव कथयति

(कठभा १.२.३)

Tarkika- logician, indeed is no knower of Veda. He as per his mental concoction, says something. Therefore, the Sruti clearly says that mind should not be carried away by logic. नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया । By tarkikas is meant those belonging to the other systems like Sankhya, Vaisesika and Boudha. They formulate their doctrines guided only by their, intellect, without enquiring into the Veda. The extremely profound Brahman is beyond the grasp of logic. Bhartrihari in Brahma Kanda of Vakyapadiya says यत्नेनानुमितोऽप्यर्थः कुशलैरनुमातृभिः । अभियुक्ततरैरन्यैरन्यथैवोपपाद्यते ॥

That which is postulated by great effort by clever tantrikas with due deliberation is refused by other more intelligent tantrikas who postulate differently. Thus there is no finality in logic. Parabrahman is self-established, and is not to be established afresh. That which is established is made known exactly as it is by the wise. Therefore, only the ancient Veda tells the truth.

७. न च परिनिष्ठितवस्तुविषयत्त्वेऽपि प्रत्यक्षादिविषयत्वं ब्रह्मणः ।
तत्त्वमसि इति ब्रह्मात्मभावस्य शास्त्रमन्तरेण अनवगम्यमानत्वात् ॥

(सू.भा. १.१.४)

When Brahman is ever existing, where is the need for Veda to make known Brahman? Can It not be determined by perception or inference? The Sun is a bright object of perception. If it is said that the Sun's size, weight, distance from the earth are all determined by the scientist by perception etc. it is not so. Validity of inference can be ascribed in this case. Though Brahman is an established entity, It is not knowable by sense. Inference cannot hold in this case. Also, Veda says, ' That thou art'. From this the knowledge "I am Brahman" arises. That Jiva is verily Brahman is known only through the Veda. This can never be determined by reasoning. नावेदविन्मनुते तं बृहंतम् । One who is not a knower of Veda cannot know Brahman.

८. न हि प्रतिबन्धक्षयादेव विद्योत्पद्यते
नत्वीश्वरप्रसादतपोध्यानाद्यनुष्ठानाद् इति नियमोऽस्ति ।
ब्रह्मचर्यादीनां च विद्यां प्रत्युपकारकत्वात्
साक्षादेव कारणत्वात् श्रवणमननिदिध्यासनानाम् ॥

(तै.शिक्षा.भा. अनु.११)

There is no rule to the effect that knowledge comes from the extinction of obstacles alone, and not from the divine grace or from the practice of austerity and dhyana and the like. Ahimsa, Brahmacharya etc are all conducive to wisdom, while sravana (study of Upanishads) manana (reflection upon their teachings) and nididhyasana(contemplation) are the immediate cause of wisdom.

Vidya means Brahmajnana. By performing actions ordained by scriptures, mind becomes pure. Mental dirt is the impurity of the mind and is the obstacle for the arising of jnana. A doubt may arise whether this impurity of the mind can be removed by

actions, devotion, grace of god, control of senses, penance etc. This doubt is not proper. A person does not become educated merely by the removal of the defect in his eye. He has to read the text, learn the lessons from the teacher and make effort. Likewise, here too, by grace of God, meditation, hearing, reflection etc. it is possible to get knowledge of Brahman.

९. ब्राह्मणत्वस्य हि रक्षणेन रक्षितः स्याद् वैदिको धर्मः ।
तदधीनत्वात् वर्णाश्रमभेदानाम् । (गीता.पीठिका)

Only if Brahmanhood is protected, vaidikadharma is protected, because the distinction of caste and stages in life are subservient to Brahmanhood. The arrangement of caste and stage in life were firmly established during the time of Sri Shankara in Baratakhanda. Despite this, non-vedic religions had arisen here and there and were endangering this. To uphold vaidikadharma and to save people from wrong paths, Sri Shankara had to write his works, teach well being and emphasise the greatness of righteousness. In another place he has said : ब्रह्मक्षत्रे परिपालिते जगत् परिपालयितुमलम् (गीता.भा.४.१) (if brahmana-hood and kshatriya-hood are protected, then certainly is the world protected too.) The purport – is intellect favored by righteousness and the physical strength arising from these two can protect the whole world. The set up of the four-fold caste distinction is for the welfare of the society and the sate. Let these four groups unfailingly and steadfastly acquire and strengthen learning, valour, wealth and ability to serve respectively. Any inter-mixing will debilitate them. Un-righteousness will arise. This is the primary purpose of the caste system.

This division is most scientific celibacy, householdership, residing in forest (vanaprasta) and renunciation (sanyasa) are the means for the individual's prosperity and well being. For the

good of society is the caste system, and for the good of the individual are the four orders in life. This was established by vedic rishis. It is indeed a fool's prattle to condemn the system without a deep study of this secret. It is a different matter that this set up is in disuse.

१०. द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणश्च जगतः स्थितिकारणम् ।

Dharma mentioned in the Veda is of two kinds. One characteristic of activity and the other characteristic of renunciation. Celebacy and householdership are the two ways involving activity. Vanaprastha and sanyasa are the two relating to renunciation. The world to be happy, these two dharmas are essential. They are complementary to each other. An elaborate composition can be written in support of this. Which other religion in this world has given a thought to this ?

११. उपासनं च यथाशास्त्रं तुल्यप्रत्ययसन्ततिः । (गीता.पीठिका)
असङ्कीर्णा च अतत्प्रत्ययैः शास्त्रोक्तालम्बनविषया च । (तै.२.३)

Upasana, meditation, is an unbroken and uniform flow of knowledge in accordance with shastra. There should be no knowledge of anything apart from the object of meditation. The object of meditation must be in accordance with shastra. The word meditation stands for incessant remembrance of a sacred object. Even this is to be according to a shastric injunction. The holy object meditated upon should also be known by shastra. These meditations are taught in Shandilya vidya, Dahara vidya, Upakosala vidya etc. in the Upanishads. For any seeker it is difficult to concentrate and meditate upon the attributeless Brahman. Hence, a symbol is Described by shastra. The Acharya says एकमपि हि ब्रह्म विभूतिभेदैरनेकधा उपास्यते इति

स्थितिः (सू.भा.३.२.२३) (although Brahman is one, It is meditated upon as many because of Its diverse powers). Many forms of divine glory are only diverse powers of Brahman. The sun, Fire, Shiva, Vishnu etc. are manifestations of Brahman's divine glory. While meditating on one God, the thought of another object should not occur. Continuous flow of knowledge of that one object can be called dhyana. तैलधारावत् सन्ततः अविच्छिन्नप्रत्ययो ध्यानम् । (गी.भा.१३.५) Such meditation helps in getting the knowledge of Brahman by cleansing the mind.

१२. केवलादेव ज्ञानात् मोक्ष इत्यर्थो निश्चितो गीतासु सर्वोपनिषत्सु च

(गी.अ ३-पी)

That libreration is attained only by knowledge is the decisive conclusion of the Gita and Upanishads. The Acharaya has repeated these words in many of his works. Liberation means removal of ignorance. Only knowledge removes ignorance. Darkness is removed only by light. All know this too well. Even so, many argue that liberation is possible by performing one's duties with devotion or by a combination of duty and knowledge. Veda however says that knowledge is the only means for liberation in the statements such as 'ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति ।' 'तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति ।' (Knower of Brahman is verily Brahman. Having known Him thus, he transcends death) Also, the Purushasukta emphasises clearly that no other path is known for liberation. नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ।

भक्त्या माम् अभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् । (गीता १८-५५)

Sri Krishna says, "What is My expanse due to limiting adjuncts? In fact, only through devotion can a devotee learn how I am in my real Self devoid of all limitation? Having so

known My real Self, he gets liberated". Even here it is clearly stated that knowledge of Self can arise from devotion.

१३. न हि क्रियानिर्वृत्तोऽर्थः नित्यो दृष्टः (बृह.४४.६)

No where is it found that a thing created by action is eternal. All that is born out of action must perish. It is a well established rule that a thing newly born also perishes. Liberation being ever existent is not freshly born, Therefore, infact the jiva already liberated. He is never bound. This is the final conclusion. But he has not realised that he is pure Self having no relation with the body etc., Having associated with the body etc. he is under the illusion that, he is doer, enjoyer, sick etc. The Avidya has covered him. Therefore desire sprouts in him. To be enveloped by Avidya and desire is bondage of transmigration. Only knwledge of the Absolute can eradicate this.

१४. तस्माद् अविद्यादिकर्मोपादानहेतुनिवृत्तौ स्वात्मन्यवस्थानं मोक्षः। (तै.शि.पी)

Therefore, liberation is not by action. Avidya and desire, the primary cause for action being removed to firmly stay in the Self is liberation.

१५. अभावः शरीरेन्द्रियाणां मोक्षे । (सू.भा. ४.४.१०)

In liberaion, body and senses do not exist. To the one liberated while alive, though there are the body and the sense organs, the attachment as "They are mine" will not be there. Hence it is to be understood that they do not exist.

१६. ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः । (सू.भा.१.१.४)

To be Brahman is liberation-Jiva when liberated from the bondage of Avidya etc., remains Brahman. The liberated neither goes nor comes anywhere.

१७. नियतरचनावतो विद्यमानस्यैव वेदस्य अभिव्यक्तिः पुरुष निःश्वासवत् न च पुरुषबुद्धिप्रयत्नपूर्वकः । अतः प्रमाणनिरपेक्ष एव स्वार्थे । (बृह.२.४.१०)

Including the regular order, the pre-existed Veda got manifested by the Supreme just like the breathing of man. It is not an intellectual composition by any person. Therefore, in the subject it teaches, it is its own proof, not dependent on any other. This is the eleboration of the Upanishadic sentence-

१८. न हि ईदृशस्य शास्त्रस्य ऋग्वेदादिलक्षणस्य सर्वज्ञगुणान्वितस्य सर्वज्ञादन्यतः सम्भवोऽस्ति । (सू.भा. १.१.३)

Such a shastra which includes the Ṛig and other Vedas, capable of illuminating all things, having the quality of omniscience which is able to impart knowledge of everything would not have emanated from any other than the omniscient Supreme Being.

Sri Shankara has said that Veda alone is the ultimate pramana. Advaita alone is the vedic doctrine. This indeed is the valid doctrine. Logic must be used in conformity with Veda, If used in opposition, it becomes fallacious. By such logic truth cannot be known. There is no harm if logic is also accepted as a proof when not opposed to Veda. It is only Veda that can be helpful in knowing Brahman which is supra sensory.

Samkeerna (Intermingling)

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada had vast wordly knowledge just as he was proficient in all shastras. Some sentences given as example on several occasions are good statements worthy of memorising. They are in plenty. By way of illustration, a few are given here.

१९. तस्मात् न परमपीडयित्वा ग्रसितुमपि शक्यते । (बृह.१.५.२)

Because food is eaten by all, even a morsel cannot be eaten without troubling another. Every being has the right to consume food created by the Supreme. When we take a morsel, recognise that we are denying it to another. As food is to sustain all beings, it is common to all- एकमस्य साधारणम् so says the Brihadaranyaka sruti, नात्मार्थं पाचयेदन्नम् (food must not be cooked for only one's self) says the Dharamasastra. The import is that one should eat only after offering it to another person, animal or insect. The purpose of Vaiswadeva is this.

२०. न हि पूर्वजो मूढ आसीदित्यात्मनापि मूढात्मना भवितव्यमिति किञ्चिदस्ति प्रमाणम् । (सू.भा. २.१.११)

That one should also be stupid, just because one's ancestor was stupid is baseless. By this it may be guesed how much importance was given by the Acharya to enquiry and logic. Moderners talk lightly saying that the predecessors were of blind belief. By surrendering to blind belief, how can knowledge widen? Sri Shankara in his Bhashya has condemned such religious faiths by raining logical arguments. There is a limitation even to logic. If tried to arrive at conclusions through only dry logic, no finality can be reached. Brahma and Dharma these two are beyond the scope of human logic. Only impersonal Veda can teach these. Any amount of reasoning may be employed in conformity with sruti. That which is not in conformity with sruti should not be placed on the whetstone of logic. This is because Brahman and Dharma do not fall within the reach of human intellect.Without meddling with these two, let man set up any system for the welfare of the society.

२१. उदयश्च नाम सवितुस्तन्निवासिनां प्राणिनां चक्षुर्गोचरतापत्तिः तदत्ययश्च अस्तमनम् । न परमार्थतः उदयास्तमाने स्तः ।

(छां.३.१०.४)

Sunrise means the Sun becoming visible to the beings in a particular area.Likewise, sunset is when the Sun is not visible. In reality there is no sunrise or sunset. Here Sri Shankaracharaya is in agreement with the earlier Acharayas, Anandagiri commentry quotes the Sruti. स वा एष न कदाचन अस्तमेति नोदेति as proof. Also to emphasise that there is neither sunrise nor sunset, he has quoted two verses from other texts.

यैर्यत्र दृश्यते भास्वान् स तेषामुदयः स्मृतः ।
तिरोभावं च यत्रैति तदेवास्तमनं रवेः ॥
नैवास्तमनमर्कस्य नोदयः सर्वदा सतः ।
उदयास्तमने नाम दर्शनादर्शने रवेः ॥

The Sun does not rise or set. This is the truth as enunciated in Veda. Day and night are caused by Earth's rotation. This is self evident.

२२. पृथिवीच्छायां हि शार्वरं तम आचक्षते । (बृह.६.२.११)

The shadow of the earth is said to be tge darkness of night When a portion of the earth faces the Sun, that is day. Opposite to this, on the otherside, there will be darkness. That is the shadow of the earth. When such shadow of the earth is in a specific place in the firmament, it is termed as Rahu. Therefore, in Astronomy, Rahu is termed as darkness, a shadow planet. A stanza in Anandagiri treatise can be perused.

उद्धृत्य पृथिवीछायां निर्मितं मण्डलाकृति ।
स्वर्भानोस्तु बृहत् स्थानं तृतीयं यत्तमोमयम् ॥

A large place has been created taking the circular shadow of the earth. This is the third position of Rahu constituting of darkness. Ignorant are those who talk without even a casual glance at Veda shastras or knowing their ultimate meaning.

२३.न हि अनुत्साहवतां अननुतिष्ठतां अलसानां भोगप्राप्तिः लोके दृष्टा । (छा.३.६.२)

Enjoyment of happniess is nowhere seeen in the world for the lazy people who have no enthusiasm and do not engage in activity.

Everybody in the world desires happiness. None desires sorrow. Hence everyone should be enthusiastic and be constantly engaged in work. "Oh man, work hard and toil, do not be lazy" is the injunction of the Acharaya. "In action lies the fulfilment" is not a new proclamation. In the Gita, Sri Krishna says, कुरुकर्मैव तस्मात् त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् । Nowhere has vedanta enjoined inactivity and laziness. But it says- "Let your earnings be honest and lawful. Do not try to earn through deceitful means. Even when earned through lawful means, your enjoyment hurts others to some extent." This being the case, it is needless to say that unlawfully earned wealth hurts others. This is the import of the Acharya's advice. Vedanta itself reveals what is everlasting happiness. That is not easly obtained. ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम् । (All this is the abode of Iswara) Therefore, act only to please Iswara. Never forget Iswara. Iswara is all this. Janardana is embodied in mankind. Even this loud utterance is self evident. Sri Shankara's life itlesf is the foremost example of hard work. The wise must realise that there was no semblance of laziness, even for a short while, in the lifee of Sri Shankara who in his short span of life achieved so much which could not be achieved by others in hundereds of years. उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत (Arise, awake, seek the learned and acquire knowledge) is the heroic song of Veda.

Poetic composition is a fine art pleasing to the heart. This is rarely found to favour those who are constantly immersed in

Vedanta and are adepts in dry logic. Poetry demands special brilliance. In particular, a poet composing devotional hymns must be a great devotee. By the mere recollection of the greatness of the Almighty, his tender heart must become mellow. In the light of this, we are amazed at Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada's compositions of varied devotional songs. Hymns such as Soundaryalahari, Shivanandalahari, Sivaparadha kshamapanastotra. Anandalahari, Sri Lakshminarasimha stotra, Achutashtaka, Gangashataka etc., are bunches of grapes filled with the nectar of devotion. These songs melt the hearts of listeners with their soft, sweet, lilting words. The Acharaya said aloud, "I will win over all of them, here starts the enquiry जेष्यामि सर्वान् आरभे च चिन्ताम् । when he was poised for a bitter fight with the logicians. Shankara was a warrior but he was soft and mellow with full devotion at the time of composing hymns. To him all Gods are worthy of worship. There is no partiality towards any. What is the purpose of his prayer? He does not seek long life, health, wealth or happiness. The mental state of those who have attained the highest place in Adhyatma field, is really great, noteworthy and it is for the prosperity of mankind.

अविनयमपनय विष्णो
दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगतृष्णाम् ।
भूतदयां विस्तारय
तारय संसारसागरतः ॥ -विष्णु षट्पदी

Oh Vishnu! Please remove my insolence; tame my mind; restrain my passion for worldly pleasures. May my kindness towards beings blossom and make me cross the ocean of Samsara.

There was no need for such prayers to the Acharya who had accomplished his objects. He has blessed humanity with these model prayers to enable them to offer their prayers accordingly.

How can an advaitin with the realisation "I am Brahman" be a supplicant before God.

सत्यपि भेदापगमे
नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।
सामुद्रो हि तरङ्गः
क्वचन समुद्रो न तारङ्गः ॥

Oh Lord! Even when there is no distinction between us, I am yours (devotee); you are not under my command. This is similar to the wave belonging to the ocean, though the ocean does not belong to the wave.

An old man was learning grammar by repeating aloud डुकुरुञ्करणे which was incorrect. The correct wording being डुकृञ् hearing that out of compassion towards him, Sri Bhagavatpada, composed the Bhajagovindam hymn and put him wise.

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं
गोविन्दं भज मूढमते ।
सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले
नहि नहि रक्षति डुकृञ्करणे ॥

Oh! Stupid Brahmana, "Pray to Govinda when death is near; repeating the grammar rule incorrectly will never protect you."

Here the Acharya is not condemning the science of vyakarana. Grammar is for learning while young. 'The old man is trying to learn it at his advanced age. When can he really become proficient in grammar and be able to practice Vedanta. Therefore, this is not the time to start learning. Death is fast approaching. Let him at least pray to Govinda now, which only can be for his well being"- This is the purport of the hymn. But

what can be done? inspite of approaching death, mind is not turning towards God. There is ambition to become known as a scholar, there is desire for wealth. Such desires occur in succession.

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं
दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।
वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं
तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशा पिण्डम् ॥

Limbs have debilitated, hair has brown grey, the mouth is toothless, still the old man moves aimlessly, holding a staff. Even then, desires do not leave him. Praising the Goddess, Sri Shankara says 'Oh! Mother I did not render proper service at your feet; this might be due to some reason- i did not know the method of rendering service, I was empty handed, I did not have the strength to serve, or the cause may be my laziness. Oh! Goddess, who uplifts all, a wicked son may be born, but there can never be a wicked mother."

विधेरज्ञानेन द्रविणविरहेणालसतया
विधेयाशक्यत्वात् तव चरणयोर्या च्युतिरभूत् ।
तदेतत् क्षन्तव्यं जननि सकलोद्धारिणि शिवे
कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति ॥

Here it can be seen how deftly Sri Shankara, the greatest of poets, transforms a royal command मातृदेवोभव to a pleading by the beloved. (कान्तासम्मिता)

Every stanza in the hymns written by Sri Shankaracharya in the Vaidarbhi style is full of aesthetic beauty with simple words capable of expressing devotion. To illustrate this, two stanzas

are quoted without giving their meaning. The following is the description of the parting of hair on the head of the Goddess.

वहन्ती सिन्धूरं प्रबलकबरीभारतिमिर
द्विषां वृन्दैर्बन्दीकृतमिव नवीनार्ककिरणम् ।
तनोतु क्षेमं नस्तववदनसौन्दर्यलहरी
परीवाहस्रोतः सरणिरिव सीमन्तसरणिः ॥

(Shivanandalahari)

This stanza is given as an example for 'prastutankura alankara' by Shri Appaiah Dixitar in his 'Kuvalayananda'.

In स्रोतः सरणिरिव the figure of speech hyperbole is adopted.

Oh Shambho! Let the stream of your glorious story flow and collect in the pool of my mind.

गलन्ती शम्भो त्वच्चरितसरितः किल्बिषरजो
दलन्ती धीकुल्यासरणिषु पतन्ती विजयताम् ।
दिशन्ती संसारभ्रमणपरितापोपशमनम्
वसन्ती मच्चेतोह्रदभुवि शिवानन्दलहरी ॥

(Shivanandalahari)

We can also remember her Vivekachoodamani composed by the Acharya. It is a poetic composition, explanatory in nature, simple in style, detailing the tenets of Vedanta, in the style of conversation between the Guru and the sishya. Though it is a shastra text, the excellence of the master's poetic thought is explicitly shown. Sri Shankara equates his master Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada with Sri Vishnu, and offers his salutations.

सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तगोचरं तमगोचरम् ।
गोविन्दं परमानन्दं सद्गुरुं प्रणतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥

Here the epithet अगोचरम् (unseen) employed to denote his Sadguru may perhaps be due to the fact that his master had attained Videhamukti at the time of writing the text.

The Stanza written to salute his paramaguru Sri Gowdapadacharya is very pleasing. This stanza occurs at the end of the Bhashya on Mandukya Karika.

प्रज्ञावैशाखवेधक्षुभितजलनिधेर्वेदनाम्नोऽन्तरस्थं
भूतान्यालोक्य मग्नान्यविरतजननग्राहघोरे समुद्रे ।
कारुण्यादुद्दधारामृतमिदममरैर्दुर्लभं भूतहेतोः
यस्तं पूज्याभिपूज्यं परमगुरुमहं पादपातैर्नतोऽस्मि ॥

Beings are wallowing without respite in the dreadful ocean infested with crocodiles viz repeated births; seeing their pathetic state, out of compassion and for their well being, Sri Gowdapadacharya, after churning the vast ocean i.e., Veda, with the churning rod of his intellectual power, has salvaged the nectar of Self knowledge from the bottom of that ocean. at the feet of my revered guru and my holy paramaguru, I offer prostration's at every step.

Hidden here are the special meanings only Shankara could infuse- "to churn the ocean of milk to get Amrita, Gods had to bring in the Mandara mountain and Vasuki; while for Sri Gowdapada, his intellectual power was enough to churn the vast ocean of Veda. When the ocean of milk was churned, first emanated halahala-a terrific poison, and the universe was grief striken. When the ocean of Veda was churned, no poison came out. Gods churned the ocean for their selfish purpose, whereas Sri Gowdapada strove for the well being of the people submerged in samsara. What gods obtained was not pure Amrita. It was the nectar contaminated with grief.

They could not escape from the onslaught of demons even after drinking that Amrita. They could not escape from death even at the time of final dissolution. The nectar of Self knowledge lifted up by our Acharya was pure. Soon after drinking this, all pangs of samsara vanish, and there will be no rebirth! This nectar was beyond the reach of devas. Devas were selfish, while the merciful Acharaya was full of compassion towards beings. This nectar of Self-knowledge is accessible to all beings in the world. I had the privilege of distributing this nectar to all humanity. I prostrate again and again at the feet of my Guru who gave me such an opportunity". Such is the poetic composition of Sri Acharya effervescent with the feeling of devotion.

It is only out of compassion to beings that Sri Shankara has lifted out of the ocean of Veda the rarest jewel viz Viveka Choodamani too. He has composed this great poetic work in easily understandable lucid style and embellished it with the shine of poetry.

The following gems of sayings are worth remembering

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद् दैवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥

In this world, these three are very difficult to obtain- human birth, desire for emancipation, and association of great, wise and pious people. These three can be got only by the grace of Iswara.

इतः को न्वस्ति मूढात्मा यस्तु स्वार्थे प्रमाद्यति
दुर्लभं मानुषं देहं प्राप्य तत्रापि पौरुषम् ॥

Not easily obtainable human body has been got, and even there the masculine birth. This being so, one who ignores what

should be done for self upliftment is really a fool. There is no greater idiot than he.

Liberation is for oneself. This is also selfish! What a wonder! People who are asked to practice Vedanta for their own good, reject such a proposition. Opportunities to go out and come in contact with accomplished men and learn Vedanta are available in plenty to men, whereas to women engaged in domestic duties, such opportunities are limited. therefore, Acharya has stated "even after getting masculine birth, प्राप्य तत्रापि पौरुषम् it is never to be understood to mean that women should not learn Vedanta.

अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तितः ।
न स्नानेन न दानेन प्राणायामशतेन वा ॥

According to the benign instructions of Veda and sadguru, the reality of Self must be enquired into and the truth must be determined. Neither by self study ignoring the above nor by any other means can the reality of the Self be known. It is not possible by purificatory baths offering Dana, and not even by a hundred breath-control practices.

ऋणमोचनकर्तारः पितुः सन्ति सुतादयः ।
बन्धमोचनकर्ता तु स्वस्मादन्यो न कश्चन ॥

An indebted person can be relieved of his debt by his son, a friend or other relative, whereas release from this bondage of birth and death (samsara) can be only through self effort. No other person can ever release one from such a bondage उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं ।

LITERARY WORKS

The Acharya's works can be divided into three sections viz., Bhashya, Prakarana and Hymns. Researchers have written that there are forty stotras ascribed to Sri Shankara. The works accepted by the learned are categorised as under:

1. भाष्य (Bhashyas)

These are the triad i.e., Upanishads, Brahmasutra and the Bhagavad-Gita. Under the section Bhashya, we find commentaries on the ten Upanishads- Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aithareya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka; also on the Vishnusahasranama, mandukya karika, Sanatsujatiya and lalitha trishati

2. Prakaranas (Explanatory works)

A prakarana is a short work, explaining a subject, which is not elaborately dealt with in the Bhashyas. The following are such works of Acharya : Upadeshasahasri, Vivekachoodamani, Nirvanashatka, Dasha shloki, Shata shloki, Drig drishya viveka, Savartika Panchikarana, Bhajagovinda Stotra, Advaita Pancharatna, Prashnottara Malika and Eka shloki.

3. Hymns

The well known among the stotras are: Ganesha Pancharatna, Shivanandalahari, Soundaryalahari, Shivaparadha kshamapanastotra, Devyaparadha kshamapanastotra, Dakshinamurthy stotra, Dashashloki, Manisha Panchaka, Anandalahari, Harimide stotra, Vishnushatpadi, etc. there are some more which are said to be the works of the Acharya.

Among the above, most prominent are the commentaries on the Prasthanatraya. Even for a comprehensive study of these Bhashyas alone a whole life span may be required.

UPASAMHARA (CONCLUSION)

It is appropriate to study deeply at least some aspects of the uncommon personality of Sri Shankara, the great help the rendered for the better understanding of the shastras and his urge for the welfare of mankind.

Vedas are the only authentic shastra. As they are impersonal and have emanated from the omniscient Supreme Being, we have to note that what is said in the veda is true. Smritis and Puranas which are not opposed to Vedas are also authentic. Knowledge of reality can be secured even by logic which is in consonance with veda. Vedas have proclaimed that the cause of this universe is a sentient being. Hence it is decided that the creator is Iswara. As Brahman is the only reality and this perceived universe is the creation by the wish of Iswara, the particle theory of vaisesika, Sankhyas' theory that inert prakriti is the cause of creation, the theory of eternality of the perceived world and shunyavada- all stand negated. The nastika's argument denying the self makes him a laughing stock as the negator of the self is himself.

"Vidhi" is **making known** and not 'causal.' Vidhi tells the state of a thing as it is and retires. To do or not to do it differently pertains to the doer. The Karma Kanda and the Upasana Kanda of the veda are subservient to he Jnana Kanda. They are not primary by themselves. Liberation is only by knowledge. Liberation does not imply going to some other world. To abide firmly in Self is liberation. These ideas are the brilliant contributions of the Acharya to philosophy. Also, non-duality of Brahman is a significant thesis handed down in succession from the ancient seers. Various theories sprang upon this subsequently. The wise saying is "tastes differ". By slightly altering the Advita tenet, some learned ones formulated systems such as Shaktadwaita, Shivadwaita, and Shabdadwaitha. The glory of setting aside all these and reestablishing the non-duality of Brahman, in conformity with the theory of the harmony of all religions- सर्वमत सामरस्य by Gowdapada, belongs to Sri Shankaracharya.

HARMONY AMONG RELIGIONS

Examined closely, the Advaita doctrine is not opposed to other systems such as Sankhya, Saiva and Vaishnava

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रतिगच्छति ।

All doctrines and all religions get merged in the mighty ocean of Advaita. That the Acharya did not freshly establish a new system after initiating, he did not form a group- "Shankaras". The religious traditions and observances are in the domain of Dharmashastra and have no relevance to Advaita was the firm stand of Sri Shankara. The idea of religious conversion did not occur even in his dreams. Hence, where is the cause for religious hatred, in him? It is a recent prattle by some that Sri Shankaracharya tormented Bouddhas and drove them away to other countries. This is a false accusation made out of sheer ignorance or hatred. How is it possible for a lone recluse to drive away a religion patronage? Perhaps such a question did not occur to those critics. According to history the truth is that the Bouddha religion earned hatred of the society by its foul vamachara practices known as Vajrayana. Thousands of Bhikshus joined Bouddha resting abodes, (आराम) wandered collecting alms and became a burden on the people. The resting abodes in Kerala and Bihar were destroyed by the Muslims and all the Bhikshus there were forcibly converted to Islam.

This is borne by historical evidence. Also, the theory of 'No Self' was not dear to the people of Bharata. For these reasons, Buddhism did not get a foothold in this country, and got excommunicated on its own. The Acharya has refuted Jainism, which co-flourished with Buddhism, even when the Buddha

lived, as it is opposed to Veda. How is then that Jainism is surviving safely even now in Bharata? Let the accuser think well on this issue.

Another incident deserve attention. It was Sri Kumarilabhatta, who refuted Buddhism vehemently. it seems he was a disciple of a Bouddha guru for a short period. Hence, realising that by refuting Buddhism, he committed gurudroha-disservice to guru, he prescribed for himself a purificatory rite! Being a famous vidwan and a staunch observer of karma, he sat in the middle of a heap of burning husk and slowly burnt himself to death. Is there any other example of an adherence to righteousness known to the world similar to this one of this vaidika Brahmana who steadfastly upheld the four-fold caste system? The purpose of Sri Shankara in refuting other doctrines and establishing his own doctrine is to show the Absolute Reality for the well being of humanity and not out of hatred towards other religions. To show clearly that liberation as was formulated by some of the advaitins themselves. As search for Reality was his aim, he has said in the Brihadaranyaka Bhashya.

तस्मात् श्रुत्यर्थकल्पनाकुशलाः सर्वे एव उपनिषदर्थमन्यथा कुर्वन्ति ।
तथापि वेदार्थश्चेत् स्यात् कामं भवतु न मे द्वेषः ॥ (बृह.२.३.६)

All other people dexterous in concoting the meaning of the Sruti, are interpreting the Upanishads differently. Even if it be the true meaning of Veda, may that be as desired; I have no hatred".

Who else can make such a bold statement of true determination?

Sri Shankara's stand is that the Sankhya and other doctrines, being dualistic, are not in consonance with Veda,

because the distinctions such as 'I' 'You' and 'he' the knowledge that the perceived world is real and that the individual soul and the universal soul as separate are all known to all.

Is a shastra necessary to teach the duality which is perceived? न च उपदेशार्हं द्वैतं, जातमात्रप्राणिबुद्धिगम्यत्वात् (Dualism is not worthy of instruction. Every creature is aware of it) -said Sri Bhagavatpada.

The rishis such as Kapila and Kanaada were not unaware of this truth. They had to formulate shastras in accordance with the competence of men seeking knowledge. This is similar to different grades of text books being prescribed for different levels of classes. They are like the flight of steps leading to the sanctum sanctorum of the non-dual Atman. This is explicity put forth in the Suta Samhita Yajna Vaibhava Khanda Ch.22.13.14

सोपानक्रमतो देवो वेदमार्गस्य कारणम् ।
वेदमार्गस्थितो देवः साक्षान्मुक्तेस्तु कारणम् ॥
तत्रापि कर्ममार्गस्थो ज्ञानश्रद्धाप्रदो हरः ।
ज्ञानमार्गस्थितः शम्भुर्ज्ञानद्वारेण मोक्षदः ॥

The import is-to whatever sect a devotee may belong by reposing unalloyed devotion in God such a devotee will be lead on to the path of Veda by God himself by leading him up the flight of steps. If one is strongly adhering to Karmamarga, Lord will elevate him to Jnanamarga. Parameswara is to be known by the Jnanamarga. He will lead the devotee through Jnanamarga and liberate him. Therefore, Sri Gowdapada has said that the non-dualist is not opposed to any dualist.

स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थासु द्वैतिनो निश्चिता दृढम् ।
परस्परं विरुध्यन्ते तैरयं न विरुध्यते ॥

अद्वैतं परमार्थो हि द्वैतं तद्भेद उच्यते ।
तेषामुभयथा द्वैतं तेनायं न विरुध्यते ॥ (मां.का.३.१७.१८)

The purport is- the dualists such as Sankhyas have postulated their theories according to their own understanding. They fight among themselves, holding that ones own theory is perfect. The non-dualists do not oppose them because this advaita doctrine has the capacity to show the absolute reality exactly as it is Dwaita doctrine is an offshoot of Advaita doctrine and a transfiguration of non dual Brahman. These transfiguration are of various forms. Pot, jar, jug, plate etc., all made of earth may collide against one another, but, pot, jar etc cannot confront mud, which is their material cause.

As the advaitin accepts parlance reality, he is not opposed to dwaitin who maintains that the world is real. There is no dispute even regarding the stand that Jivatma is subservient to Paramatma for a seeker in the devotional path. The Christians and Muslims also say that God is formless; the Advaitin too who accepts attributeless Brahman, agrees with them. As the advaitin accepts Brahman with attributes, he concurs with the ideas of Iswara with form. Even if the variations in God such as Siva, Vishnu, Ganesha, Lakshmi, Parvati, Saraswati and Kali are concocted, and are held to be different and the worshipper of each argues that his god is supreme the Advaitin agree with them. The Advaitin believes that the mind of the ignorant should not be unsetlled. advaita Siddhantha, which teaches the harmony of all religions, has no dispute with any body.

REJUVINATION OF VEDIC DOCTRINE

On account of various reasons, Vaidika siddanta suffered a set back, although it was prevailing in this country since time immemorial. To uplift it many scholars like Kumarila Bhatta were endeavouring. The absence of Kshatriya kings' royal patronage, congenial to Vaidika dharma, was unavailable and other non-vedic doctrines gained strength. The Advaita doctrine of Jnana Kanda was shaken by the onslaught of the logicians. At such a time, as per God's dispensation, Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada was born to uplift the vedic path. He travelled all over the Bharata Khanda, infused fresh energy into the Vedanta tree, as rain during spring would to the tree withered during wintér, and made it spread into various branches. He cleared the weeds and the creepers around the vedic tree and made the place clean. It was not that the thought of weeds growing again under the tree did not occur to Sri Shakara because of the absence of Kshatriya kings who were protectors of Dharma. Being farsighted he established four mathas in the four directions of the country, with a view to protecting Veda Dharma. He appointed Sri Sureswara and the other disciples four in all to preside over these mathas. As only four mathas were inadequate to this vast country, other shishyas established separate branch mathas in several places suitably. Nourishing of Advaita siddantha protection of vaidika dharma and such other duties were assigned to these mathadhipatis. The ancient veda tree is still alive entirely because of the keen farsightedness of the Acharya.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY

Whenever we take a religious vow (sankalpa) we say भरतखण्डे भारतवर्षे (in Bharata Khanda, Bharata varsha). The idea that this country is one is not new. It is seen from epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata and recent history that several independent kings ruled over smaller provinces such as Kosala, Videha, Magadha, Kerala etc. what was the driving force that preserved the unity of the country? It would be unreasonable to say that it became one nation because the famous emperor Bharata ruled over the entire country. Even if it be admitted, how is it that the country has remained one unit over such as long period? This is a very vast country. There are people speaking different tongues. Several independent kings have ruled over various provinces. Hence it is not political unity. It is the vedic culture and the Samskrita literature which have acted as the binding force to preserve the unity of this country. The vigorous spread of this culture from the south sea to the northern Himalayas cannot be denied. Gods such as Siva, Vishnu etc., temples, idol worship, firm belief in re-birth faith in places of pilgrimage like Kashi, Rameswara etc., ceremonial rites like marriage, uniformity in Dharmic injunctions, faith in Ramayana and Mahabharata as our sacred texts- these are the several facts of vedic culture. It is on account of the influence of this culture, that the Hindus belonging to Bharata Khanda have not lost the uniformity in customs, faith and enquiry. It is common knowledge that Bouddha and Jaina literatures were also influenced by samskrita.

During the time of Sri Shankaracharya, Samskrita was prevalent over the entire country. It was understood by people in all provinces. That is why the Acharya wrote his work in Samskrita. For the same reason it was possible for him to tour

all over the country and spread the Advaita doctrine. The influence of the doctrine took root all over. Samskrita literature copiously flourished.

The Acharyas victory journey is beyond our comprehension. There were no proper roads. It is a wonder how he could have toured on foot from Kerala to Kashmir and from Assam to Gujarat. He held discussions with learned men, gave enlightening talks to the common people, wrote many texts pertaining to shastra, composed hymns, toured the entire country on foot, sustaining only on alms collected in his palm, and resting under trees, ascended the Sarvajna Peetha in Kashmira and held aloft the banner of vaidika Dharma. All these are most thrilling events, more so as he accomplished all these in his short life-span of thirty-two years! He never craved for wealth or power. Ceaselessly did he toil to protect dharma, to sustain truth, and worked for the well being of humanity, and greatly enhanced the capacity for Adhyatmic enquiry in the country. By all these, he firmly established his magnificent glory in all its prestine purity. We the people of Bharata Khanda must remember for ever with gratitude such personality, Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada.

Vedanta does not look down on human life. It teaches that human birth is due to the blessings of Iswara, and proper use of it must be made. It addresses the humans as the children of the Immortal अमृतस्य पुत्राः. It also instructs that one should be prompt in action, steady in heart and strong in body. For all seekers in the path of Sadhana, skill in action is most important. Isavasya therefore instructs कुर्वन्नेवेहकर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतगँ समाः (Ever doing action dexterously, one should live a hundred years).

Taithriya Upanishard enjoins that one should not swerve from study and teaching this is penance.

It appears that action sans attachment was customary, specially among the kings of yore. There is a clear mention of such knowers such as pravahana, Jaivili, Aswapati etc., Sri Krishna clearly says that such as system, traditionally handed down, was known to the royal sages.

The summary of the above is that Vedanta is not meant for the old, sick, lazy and disabled. This learning is for all beings with intellect. It does not work if one were to say "I must now strive for the family, let me think of Vedanta when opportunity arises." Obstructions and difficulties are waiting in endless succession. According to the Gita statement- स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ।

Even a little of this knowledge protects one from great fear. There will be no harm in proceeding step by step according to ones ability.

Knowledge of Brahman results by the merit earned in many births. It is difficult to acquire true but not impossible. If it cannot be acquired the Vedanta shastra would be irrelevant. Men of Self knowledge existed and continue to exist. It cannot be specified as to how they look like :

कृष्णो भोगी शुकस्त्यागी नृपौ जनकराघवौ ।
वसिष्ठः कर्मनिरतः सर्वे ते ज्ञानिनः स्मृताः ॥

Sri Krishna was a 'Bhogi' the great sage Suka was a recluse. Janaka and Sri Rama were kings, and Vasishta was steadfast in action. All these were Jnanis.

Since the time of Sri Bhagavatpada, many great people who were Bhramajnanis and jeevanmuktas have lived in Bharata

Khanda. Some are historically famous, while some others lived in recent past. They are still available to us as models.

Who has not heard of Sri Vidyaranya? At a time when the Hindu society was terrorised by evil deeds of people of different faiths, and Vaidika dharma was at its lowest ebb, this great soul established the Vijayanagar Empire, saved the Hindu society and upheld Vaidika dharma. The glory and credit of having the Vijayanagar Empire built by the great warrior brothers Hakka and Bukka, goes to Sri Vidyaranya. The great service rendered by Sri Vidyaranya a great tapaswin and Atmajnani, is to be cherished forever. His brother in previous order- Poorvashrama, Sri Sayanacharya, has written commentaries on the four Vedas. Sri Vidyaranya himself composed works such as Panchadashi, Anubhutiprakasha etc., Extensive is the Samskrita literature which had the patronage of king Bukka during the time of Vidyaranya. The fame of rejuvinating the temple of Sri Sharada Jadguru peetha on a firm basis goes to Sri Vidyaranya. He was a Self realised soul and one liberated while alive.

During 16th and 17th centuries, the mis-governance of the Moghuls was strong. King Aurangzeb, a religious fanatic, converted forcibly many Hindus to Islam. He levied jesia tax on Hindus who did not get converted. During that time, Chatrapathi Shivaji built the Maratha Empire and halted the onslaught of Aurangzeb. It was the great Sri Samartha Ramadasa who encouraged Shivaji and saved Vaidika dharma from great calamity.

ब्रह्मक्षत्रे हि सम्यक् परिपालिते जगत् परिपालयितुमलम् । If Brahmana and Kshatriya clans are well protected, that is enough to protect the whole world. The above mentioned two example would suffice to substantiate this good statement of Sri Shankaracharya.

It was said earlier that the ways of a Jnani are varied. He may be engaged in Royal duties and rule like Janaka and Sri Rama.

As ministers they may help the kings for protection of dharma. Probably the royal priests like Vasistha were rendering advice to the kings. Even Sri Vidyaranya and Sri Samartha Ramadasa followed a similar path. Sri Vidyaranya says in the Panchadashi-

ज्ञानिना चरितुं शक्यं सम्यग् राज्यादि लौकिकम् ।

It means that it is possible for a Jnani to be efficiently engaged in mundane activities like ruling over a kingdom.

Again, one who is nearer to us and is well known is Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra. He was a great Brahmajnani and wrote several good works like Sri Shankaracharya. He wandered freely even without a covering as an awadhuta (an ascetic who has renounced all worldly attachments). While alive he attained samadhi and discarded the body. He belonged to Madurai district in Tamilnadu. He was known as Shivarama Krishnan before sanyasa. The great sage Sri Paramasivendra initiated Sri Sadasiva Bramhendra into ascetic order and was his Guru, who taught him Vedanta. It is learnt that Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra entered mahasamadhi near Nerur in Tamilnadu, probably in the year 1758. His samadhi is still there.

Sri Vidyaranya Swamy has described the behaviour of jnani as- अन्धवज्जडवच्चैव मूकवच्च महीं चरेत् ।

Jnani may wander on this earth as though he is blind, inactive or dumb. There are no injunctions and prohibitions for him. As a result of his yogasiddhi miracles may happen or they may not happen. Such things have happened in the life of Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra. Towards the end, he was moving about like a mad

man without body- consciousness. He was roaming about even without clothes. Some people informed about the outwardly behaviour of Sri Sadashiva to his Guru. That Guru who was aware of his pupil's true state, exclaimed "alas! I did not get such madness." Satchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswamiji of Sringeri Peetha gives the following description of the above in his Sadashiva Brahmedrastava-

उन्मत्तवत् सञ्चरतीह शिष्यः
तवेति लोकस्य वचांसि शृण्वन्
खिद्यन्नु वाचास्य गुरुः पुराहो
ह्युन्मत्तता मे न हि तादृशीति ॥

Before attaining the state of infatuation, Sri Sadashiva brahmendra had written twenty-two Vedanta texts such as Brahmasutra Vritti, Yogasudhakara, Siddhanta Kalpavalli, Atmanusandhana and Atma Vidya Vilasa etc. He also composed devotional songs. Here are some Scintillating examples -

१. स्मर वारं वारं – चेतः । स्मर नन्दकुमारम् ॥
२. पिब रे रामरसं – रसने पिब रे रामरसं ॥
३. गायति वनमाली – मधुरं । गायति वनमाली ॥
४. ब्रूहि मुकुन्देति – रसने । ब्रूहि मुकुन्देति ॥
५. किं पृच्छसि रे मां । पण्डित–किं पृच्छसि रे माम् ॥

Sri Satchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Maha swamiji has extolled Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra in forty-five verses.

Likewise, H.H. Sri Chandrasekara Bharati Mahaswamiji Sringeri Jagadguru, was a great sage who had realised Brahman. He had gained unrivalled mastery in Nyaya, Vedantasastra etc.,

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् – the broad attitude- "the whole world is my family" was patent in his speech and action. A Muslim police

officer from the Punjab used to visit him often for darshana. He was repeatedly requesting guruji to take him into the fold of Hinduism. Likewise, a Christian householder was desiring conversion to Hinduism. The following is the instruction by His Holiness to both of them. "there is no need for conversion. What is wrong in the teachings of Jesus Christ or Mohamad Paigambar? Be a good Christian, or be a good Musalman. Your well being lies only in observing your own religion properly. "There is no doubt that one who teaches like this will have realised the Truth" "All this is but Brahman" "Sarvam Brahmamayam". Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji did not relish decrying dwaita etc. is firm conviction was that decrying other religions gives room for jealousy and hatred, and that is not fair. As his Sadhana progressed, all his matha activities faded into background. Love of solitude developed. He was in constant meditation. Towards the end he was in the avadhuta state. His speech and action appeared strange to others. People started whispering among themselves that Mahaswamiji was mad! Stationary trees by the wayside appear to be moving to a person in a moving train. Likewise, to a person of unsteady mind and under illusion, a Jnani of firm intellect appears to be aberated.

One thing becomes clear when the life history of great persons is perused. They grew in the Sanatana Dharma tradition and respected it. None of them caused the disintegration of society or the state. They did not sow the seed of differences. On the other hand, they toiled for the well being of the state and made all efforts towards this end. Having their primary aim सर्वे जना: सुखिनो भवन्तु – "may all be happy," they made people of this country develop themselves into men of sterling character. Not only this, their disciples and their

disciples also contributed to the task of building a nation of virtues. The motivation for this is their firm belief in Advaita. To such people who went beyond even the notion वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् "the whole world is my family" to the notion that the whole world is transmigration of the non-dual sentient Brahman and that sentient Brahman is themselves, there is nothing to be hated. Where there is duality, there is scope for anger and hatred. For those people who have imbibed the notion of non-duality, there are no likes or dislike. There will be no harm to anybody from those who have assured fearlessness to all by taking the oath of non-violence in mind, speech and action. Not only this, they being an ocean of Consciousness and Bliss, spread happiness all around. Therefore, such Brahmajnanis are indeed, the wealth of nation, the wealth of world.

WHAT THE REKNOWNED STATESMEN AND SCHOLARS HAVE SAID ABOUT ADI SHANKARA BHAGAVATPADA

1. Jawaharlal nehru

(Discovery of India, p.190)

"Born in Malabar in the far south of India, he travelled incessanty all over India, meeting innumerable people arguing, debating, reasoning, convincing and filling them with a part of his own passion and tremendous vitality...... in brief life of thirty-two years the did he work of many long lives and left such an impress of his powerful mind and rich personality on India that it is very evident to-day".....

2. Padmabhushana Sri Baldev Upadhyaya

(Professor, Banaras Hindu University and Varanaseeya Sampurnananda Sanskrit University; Director- Research Institute Varanası, Sahityacharya. Eminent Scholar)

"When this holy land of Bharat was sinking in the quagmire of non-vedic sects, when the black monster of immorality malpracties and misbehaviour enriched Bharat on all the four sides, when from one end to the other end the whole of Bharat fell into the clutches of lethargy and indolence, then happened that auspicious arrival of Acharya Shankara in this country. When the flame of religiosity was the brink of extinction in front of the dust storm of vanity and was counting its final moments, Acharya Shanakra saved it from getting extinguished.... In the whole world Shankara is completely identified with unity, integrity and religiosity of this vast and great country Bharat, and for us, even today, the dignity of his profound scholarship and the importance of diligence is a great trust- a great achievement."

3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad

(Former President of India, a Scholar)

"Swami Shankaracharya was the great religious teacher and reformer who took the world by storm with his dynamic personality subduing all opposition and difficulties. He covered the entire country from south to north... and gave the ancient religion of the land founded by the Rishis a new lease of life undertaking his self- imposed mission of resuscitating the vedic Dharma...."

4. Dr. S. Radhakrsihnan

(Former President of India, and internationally renowned scholar and Philosopher)

"He (Shankara) is a philosopher and a poet, a savant and a saint, a mystic and a religious reformer... There have been few minds more universal than his."

5. Margaret Noble

(Sister Nivedita)

. "........... Western people can hardly imagine a personality like that of Shankaracharya. We contemplate with wonder and delight the devotion of Francis of Assisi, the intellect of Abelard, the virile force and freedom of Martin Luther and the political efficiency of Ignatius Loyola, but who could imagine all those united in one person."

6. Arthur Isenberg

'Advaita Vedanta of Shankara provides a complete philosophical and conceptual framework within which the findings of advanced modern Physical Science can be placed without stress or fear... Shankara's philosophy is assuredly

worth studying; the appeal of which became far greater with Einstein's discovery that matter and energy are interchangeable.... We must realise that Shankara must forever be numbered among the wisest sons, not of mother India alone, but of all mankind".

7. Rev. J.F. Pessein

Great credit is due to Shankara and his school for having fought strenuously against the upholders of self existence of the material world, and brought the whole universe under the sway of God to whom it owes not only its origination but also its very being. Shankara understood that the independence existence of another being would imply limitation of God.

8. Dr. Paul Deussen

The System of the Vedanta as founded on the Upanishads and Vedanta Sutras and accompanied by Shankara's commentaries on them-equal in rank to Plato and Kant- is one of the most valuable products of genius of mankind in his researches of the eternal truth philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world... Eternal philosophical truth has seldom found more decisive and striking expression than in the doctrine of the emancipating knowledge of the Atma:

9. Romain Rolland

The only religion that can have any hold on the intellectual people is the rationalistic religion of Advaita.

10. E.W. Tomlin

With Shankara we have to do with a philosopher of very different caliber; infact we have with one of the greatest of all philosophers, whose work ought to be better known in the occident than it is.

PUBLICATIONS OF VEDANTA BHARATI

SHIVASTHOTRANI
(of Shri Shankara Bhagavatpada with Kannada Translation)

ASHEERVACHANAM
(English Translation of Asheervachana of Shri Shri Shri Jagadguru, Dakshinamnaya Shringeri Sharada Peeta)

VIVEKACHUDAMANI
(Samskritha Commentary of Shringeri Jagadguru Sri Sri Chandrashekhar Bharathi Mahaswamiji and with Kannada Translation)

SHIVANANDALAHARI & DAKSHINAMURTHY STHOTRA
(with Kannada Translation)

YUGAPURUSHA SHANKARA
(Kannada Version)

YUGAPURUSHA SHANKARA
(English Version)

SHANKARA SANDESHA
(Collection of Lekhanas)

DEVISTHOTRANI - PART I
(with Kannada Translation)

DEVISTHOTRANI - PART II
(with Kannada Translation)

SIDDHANTHA LESHASANGRAHA
(with Kannada Translation)

VEDANTA BHARATI
(A brief Introduction)

The Vedas are the treasure house of knowledge and they reveal the eternal values of life. The sacred truth, as contained in the Vedas and Upanishads have been revealed to great Rishis of yore who had delved deep into the ocean of knowledge. In order to spread the universal knowledge as contained in the sacred texts to humanity,
"VEDANTA BHARATI"
has been established with the Benign Blessings of His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Dakshinamnanya
Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham,
Sri Sri Sri Bharathi Teertha Swamiji
who is the chief patron of this organisation.
Sri Sri Sri Shankara Bharati Swamiji
of Yadathore Yoganandeswara Saraswathi Mutt is the patron of Vedanta Bharati. Vedanta Bharati has embarked upon compiling Advaita Kosha and other works relating to Shankara Vedanta, and has also published several works on the subject. Many more ambitious programmes have been chalked out in this direction.

VEDANTA BHARATI
(Academy of Veda - Vedanta Studies and Research)
Chandramouli Road, K.R. Nagar
Pin-571602, Mysore District
Phone : 08223-662471